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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the effectiveness of the Extended-Service Schools (ESS) Initiative, which supported the creation of 60 after school programs in 20 low-income communities nationwide. Each community adapted one of four nationally recognized models that had been successfully developed and implemented in other cities. The models all promoted academic and nonacademic development during out-of-school-hours, involving partnerships between community-based organizations and schools. The evaluation included surveys of school site coordinators and city-level program directors, site visits, and interviews with staff, partners, students, parents, and key city officials. Results indicated that across all sites, programs were put in place fairly quickly, demand for the programs was substantial, and over time, programs matured and demand for their services grew. Programs were well-designed and well-implemented. Participation in the programs was associated with behavior that could help youth stay out of trouble. There were positive effects on school attitudes and behaviors. Costs were reasonable but varied considerably. Operational challenges included funding constraints, staff shortages and retention, and difficulty in creating and implementing approaches for monitoring and assessing program quality. Three appendices include the ESS models, research overview and outcome measures, and the ESS cost study. (Contains 43 references, 12 tables, and 4 figures.)(SM)

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Multiple Choices After School:
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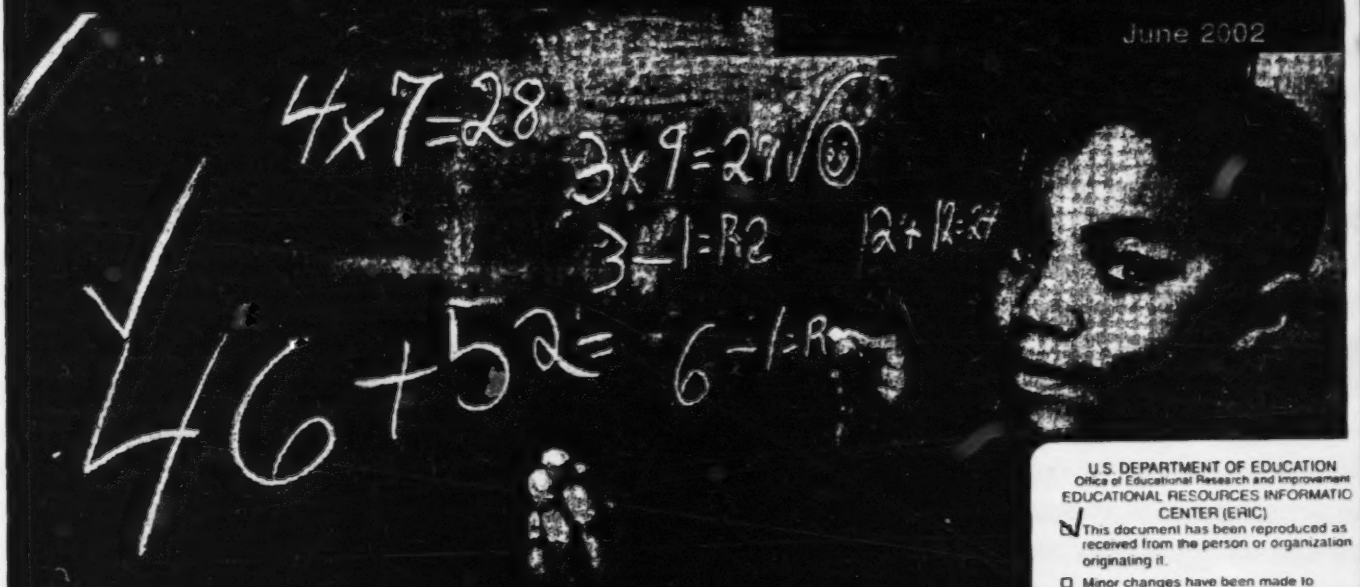
June 2002



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Public/Private Ventures is a national nonprofit organization that seeks to improve the effectiveness of social policies and programs. P/PV designs, tests and studies initiatives that increase supports, skills and opportunities of residents of low-income communities; works with policymakers to see that the lessons and evidence produced are reflected in policy; and provides training, technical assistance and learning opportunities to practitioners based on documented effective practices.

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Executive Summary

Communities across the nation are realizing that after-school programs help children become responsible, productive citizens of tomorrow, while helping their parents be responsible, productive citizens today. As a result, new programs are springing up all over the country. With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in January 2002, the issue of after-school programming will be on the minds and the agendas of more people than ever before.

This act converted the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) from a federally to a state administered program. Every state is eligible to receive a portion of the billion dollars appropriated for the program, giving all the states a concrete funding opportunity to address the after-school needs of school-aged children. With this opportunity will come the need to make many decisions about the goals, design and content of the after-school programming, decisions that will influence which children and youth participate, what they experience and how they may benefit. This report aims to put policymakers and program operators on firmer ground as they make these decisions by sharing lessons learned about the design and content of existing school-based, after-school programs.

In 1997, amidst the growing interest in after-school programs, the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds launched the Extended-Service Schools (ESS) Initiative, which supported the creation of 60 after-school programs in 20 communities around the country. Each community adapted one of four nationally recognized models that had been successfully developed and implemented in other cities around the country. These models—the Beacon, Bridges to Success, Community Schools and the West Philadelphia Improvement Corporation—all seek to promote academic and non-academic development of young people during their out-of-school hours, but differ in organizational structure and management and, to a lesser extent, in programmatic emphasis. At the same time, the models share several key features. They all operate their programs in school buildings; involve partnerships between community-based organizations (and/or universities) and schools; and offer a range of activities to the children and youth who participate, including academic and enrichment activities, and sports and recreation. In addition, in all four models, the financial resources

are under the control of the partnering organization rather than the school.

As a result of this "sameness" within variation, ESS provided an almost unique opportunity to identify and examine overarching issues involved in providing opportunities to youth in their after-school time—issues that transcend local context and the formal elements of specific models. In particular, the ESS initiative allowed a focus on four central questions:

- Which children and youth came to the after-school programs? Why did they come? Were the programs attracting the young people who could most benefit from participation?
- What were the characteristics of high-quality activities in these programs—activities that promoted the positive development of the children and youth who attended?
- What benefits did the children and youth gain from participation?
- What was the cost to operate the after-school programs, and what were the ways to finance them?

Starting in May 1998, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) and the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) began the evaluation of this large-scale initiative. We used a multi-method approach designed to provide both an understanding of the breadth of programming experiences and the ability to more deeply delve into particular issues. To learn about the activities of all the ESS programs, we asked all the school site coordinators and city-level program directors to complete annual organizational surveys summarizing what their programs were doing. To gain deeper insight into individual sites and learn about promising practices, we conducted multiple in-depth site visits to 10 cities during 1999-2000, interviewing staff, partners, students, parents and key city officials.

We also intensively focused on programs in a total of 10 schools in six of these cities. During 2000-2001, we collected computerized attendance records from those programs and gathered cost data. We administered a baseline questionnaire to fourth- to eighth-grade students between Fall 1999 and the end of 2000 as they enrolled in the program or the research. In Spring 2001, we administered a follow-up survey to fourth- to eighth-grade students who had ever enrolled in ESS and were still in the school (although not necessarily currently participating in ESS). A telephone survey of a sample of those students' parents was also conducted to learn about the program from their perspective. And, finally, in 3 of the 10 schools, we conducted multiple observations of the after-school activities.

What Have We Learned?

We found that, across all of the sites, the school-based, after-school programs could be put in place fairly quickly. It typically took from six to nine months for programs to find organizational partners and staff, assess community needs, pool additional community and financial resources, identify activity providers and recruit participants. The initial planning time was critical and, importantly, the ESS programs each received a grant of $25,000 to $50,000, as well as technical assistance, to help support this process. Over the next three years, the programs matured and demand for their services grew. Programs became better able to identify and address core goals, honed their recruiting strategies and, for the most part, developed strong relationships with their host schools. They also began to more directly focus on addressing program quality, rather than just program provision. Still, they continued to face operational challenges. These included funding constraints, staff shortages and retention, and difficulty in creating and implementing approaches for monitoring and assessing program quality.[1]

The remaining pages of this executive summary focus on key findings from the 10 intensive-study, after-school programs.

Who Participated?

1. **Demand for the programs was substantial.** Parents enrolled their children in large numbers. Among the 10 programs we intensively studied, eight considered themselves to be operating at capacity—serving as many students as they could within their available resources—by their second year of operations. In fact, interest in the after-school programs was so high, relative to available resources, that three of those programs capped their enrollments; and one

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program, in its effort to meet the demand for registration, limited the number of days a week for which each youth could register. Across the eight sites that collected participation data on all youth who were enrolled in ESS, slightly more than half of the schools' total populations were attending the after-school programs.

2. **On average, students participated in ESS for 20 days in a typical semester. They also tended to participate over an extended period of time, not just a single semester.**
Students who enrolled in ESS attended slightly under two days each week, on average. While this participation rate could suggest that students might not be attending often enough for programs to achieve their goals of strengthening youth's academic and social skills, it is important to understand that many of the participants attended these programs over an extended period of time. More than a third (35%) of the enrollees participated all four semesters that were covered by this study and, overall, 84 percent participated in two or more semesters. These participation patterns suggest the possibility of a cumulative effect of less intensive participation over time. In addition, for many youth, ESS was only one aspect of their participation in organized after-school activities, and those other activities also have the potential of providing supports and opportunities for positive development.

3. **Higher-needs students and older youth were more difficult to attract to the after-school programs.**
In ESS, as has also been found in other after-school programs, younger children attended more frequently than older youth. In addition, the students who were most easily recruited for the program tended to be those who were already "joiners." As the programs developed, staff began to more specifically target some of their recruitment strategies toward attracting the most high-needs youth—the "non-joiners"—students who were failing courses, were disengaged from school and had behavior problems. However, the challenges of attracting and retaining older and higher-needs students remained an ongoing issue for the programs.

4. **Programs that required registration for a greater number of days per week were able to more intensively serve participants, but those programs served fewer students overall.**
Required four- or five-day-a-week enrollment increased both the number of scheduled days and days attended, but allowing youth to register for only a few days a week meant that programs could serve greater numbers and, perhaps also, more diverse groups of youth. The ESS programs also found that required five-day-a-week enrollment resulted in low attendance rates unless they had a well-articulated and enforced attendance policy.

What Was the Quality of the After-School Activities?

1. **The ESS activities were, on the whole, well designed and well implemented; and different kinds of activities provided opportunities for youth to develop in different areas.**
Among the 30 activities that we observed, all but two provided at least some developmental supports and opportunities for youth, although the types of supports varied. Academic activities like homework help and tutoring are a "given" in school-based, after-school programs, and when done well, they provide youth with strong adult support that is valuable even beyond the activities' immediate purpose of building academic skills. Among the ESS programs, however, the enrichment activities provided youth with the richest environment for positive development. In addition to fostering strong adult-youth relationships, they provided opportunities for cooperative peer interaction and collaborative learning, and for youth to develop decision-making and leadership skills. A number of these activities also incorporated such academic skills as writing, math and problem solving.

2. **It was not the topic or skill that was being addressed, but the ability of the staff member leading the session that was the key to high-quality activities.**
While youth came to the activities with some initial interest in them, that interest was most likely to be heightened and sustained when specific practices were in place. These included the

activity leader's ability to create a positive social environment, where both adult-youth and peer relationships were warm and friendly, *and* a supportive but challenging intellectual environment where the adult actively motivated youth, pushed them to achieve beyond their (the youth's) initial expectations, encouraged them to persevere and praised their accomplishments. It did not seem to matter whether the activity leader was a youth worker from a community-based organization (CBO) or a teacher from the school. Teachers could be as warm and responsive to youth as were experienced staff from CBOs, and the latter were just as successful in instructing youth as were the teachers.

What Were the Benefits to Participants?

1. **Participation in school-based, after-school programs was associated with behavior that could help youth stay out of trouble.**
   One key goal of after-school programs is to provide youth with productive ways to use their out-of-school time and, thus, reduce their opportunities for risk-taking behavior. Our findings are consistent with ESS having this effect. Youth who attended the after-school programs reported less often that they had started drinking alcohol, and indicated more often than youth who did not attend ESS that they handled their anger in socially appropriate ways.

2. **Participation in the after-school programs was associated with positive effects on school attitudes and behaviors, but it is too early to know whether it has an impact on students' grades and test scores.**
   A second important goal of after-school programs is improved academic outcomes for youth. Because most of the ESS programs were new and students participated, on average, fewer than two days a week and only for a year, we did not expect to find changes in grades. Thus, we instead examined indicators of academic improvement, such as youth's sense of competence in school and their level of effort. We found that youth who attended ESS reported more often that they really paid attention in class and were very proud to belong to their school, and they less often reported that they had started skipping school during the period between the baseline and follow-up surveys.

   It is important to note that some of the apparent benefits associated with risk-taking behavior and school attitudes may reflect the fact that better-behaved and more academically inclined students participate in school-based, after-school programs. However, in the telephone survey, 80 to 90 percent of parents agreed with statements that ESS was helping their child make new friends and get along better with their peers, stay out of trouble, like school more and try harder in school, learn new skills and become more self-confident.

How Much Did the Programs Cost?

1. **The costs were reasonable but varied considerably.**
   The 10 intensive-study ESS programs cost, on average, approximately $150,000 per school year (excluding the use of the space) to serve 63 youth each day after school for five days a week. This translates into an average cost per day per youth slot of about $15 when all activities were in session. Among the 10 programs, however, this cost ranged from $8 to $36. This range resulted from a variety of factors, including requirements of the community setting (for example, the need to provide transportation home for participants at the end of the day); the programs' administrative structure; the kinds of activities offered and the staff-to-youth ratio; and investment in such factors as fundraising and the future sustainability of the program.

2. **Schools and school districts were essential sources of support.**
   Both school districts and individual schools that hosted the programs made important cash and redirected (non-cash) contributions. In the 10 intensive-study ESS sites, these partners contributed, on average, more than 20 percent of the cost of the program, including some or all of the cost of transportation, custodial assistance and snacks for participants. This contribution was in addition to the rent-free use of the school building.

3. **About 60 percent of the programs' budget needs were funded by cash grants. Raising these funds to sustain the programs over time remains challenging for the sites.**
The cash budget is the core of the program—it pays the salaried staff who administer the program and leverage the redirected contributions from schools, CBOs and other partners. For the ESS sites, a large percentage of their cash budget came through support from the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds. Sustaining the programs over time, after this initial funding ends, is likely to be an ongoing challenge. Strong leadership—whether it comes from a CBO, the school district or another partnering organization—will be a key to success. Thus far, several strategies have seemed promising: starting out the initiative in the Bridges to Success model, which has funding from the United Way; having strong lead agencies for whom the ESS initiative fits a need; and developing strong partnerships with other providers and funders. Some sites have collaborated with other youth-serving initiatives to work toward the ultimate goal of dedicated state funding, but this is a long-term strategy. More immediately, they are likely to have to rely heavily on local resources for youth programs, and the availability of those resources varies across cities.

What are the Policy Implications of these Findings?

1. **Locating the programs in schools serving low-income families was an effective means of targeting low-income children. However, special efforts are required if programs are going to be able to attract older youth and the most high-needs students in those schools.**
In ESS, participants reflected the demographics of their schools. Across the sites, the children and youth were overwhelmingly low-income, with almost three-quarters eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. However, while locating programs in schools where students have identifiable needs can go a long way toward effectively targeting services, the sites found that engaging older and higher-needs youth was a challenge. It seems likely that after-school programs, in general, would benefit from more information on attracting and serving these populations.

2. **Choices about program requirements and content influence which children and youth enroll in the after-school activities and how often they attend.**

Program characteristics affect participation patterns. At the ESS sites, planners had to make decisions about the goals and design of their programs that ultimately had an effect on which children and youth chose to participate and how often they attended. These decisions inevitably involved some trade-offs. For example, planners who decided that the program should serve, in part, as child care for parents were more likely to require, or at least allow, five-day-a-week enrollment. However, programs that designed their activities in a more flexible manner (for example, art on Mondays, judo on Tuesdays, etc.) and permitted registration for fewer days per week touched the lives of larger numbers of youth and may have attracted youth with more diverse interests. In addition, more flexible programs are likely to be more attractive to older youth and those who want to participate in other activities, such as sports.

Survey responses of ESS participants and their parents suggest that there are no easy answers for program planners as they make their decisions. Substantial proportions of both the youth and parents said the youth did not attend ESS more often because they had other things to do elsewhere. Some of these youth and their parents did not want to commit to more intensive participation in a single program. At the same time, however, a significant number of parents said that restrictive enrollment policies limited the amount of time their children might otherwise have participated in ESS. Clearly, no approach serves the needs of every child or parent equally well, but the findings emphasize that planners could benefit by getting input from their communities.

3. **To provide a range of developmental supports and opportunities to children and youth, after-school programs should offer a variety of activities staffed by skilled leaders.**
Activities of all types—be they academic, enrichment, community service or sports—can provide children and youth with valuable developmental supports and opportunities. By participating in a range of challenging and interesting activities, young people have the chance to develop new skills and interests, build positive and supportive relationships with adults and peers, and develop a sense of mattering through making decisions and taking on leadership roles. Staff practices and behaviors are the critical ingredient. Staff in high-quality activities set up physically and emotionally safe environments in which they heighten and sustain the youth's interest, making the activity challenging, as well as promoting learning and self-discovery in multiple areas (academic, social, personal). And yet, low wages and part-time hours driven by too-tight budgets, along with the limited supply of qualified youth workers, combine to make staff shortages and retention one of the largest continuing challenges for after-school programs.

4. **Cost depends as much on program choices, opportunities and local conditions as on the number of children served.**
The cost per youth slot per day ranged from $8 to $36 across the 10 intensive-study programs, suggesting that there is no one "right" cost of an after-school program. In fact, the cost of individual after-school programs depended on a number of factors, including decisions about the types of activities provided, the staff-to-youth ratio, and the extent of investment in such factors as fundraising and the future sustainability of the program. Looking across programs at a high or low level of expenditures in each of these areas, policymakers and practitioners should ask, "What does the program and the community gain from higher expenditures?"; and, "What does the program and the community do without by holding expenditures at the low end of the range?"

5. **As after-school programs multiply, the challenge of raising both cash and non-cash funding is likely to increase as more programs compete for limited resources.**
The experience of the ESS sites suggests there are challenges involved in finding sustainable sources of cash funding. While policymakers acknowledge the need to subsidize after-school programs in poor communities (as evidenced by the 21st CCLC funds, some state and local funds, and much philanthropic support), the current system still requires programs to live year to year scrambling for funds. There are few long-term and stable financial resources for after-school programs.

While much of the focus on planning and sustaining programs tends to be on raising cash funding, the non-cash portion of the budget cannot be taken for granted. Across the 10 intensive-study programs, 40 percent of the budget, on average, was obtained through contributions from partner organizations. However, as after-school programs grow to scale, this form of support is likely to become more tenuous. For example, while school district contributions to the after-school programs grew over the course of the initiative, districts in several of the ESS cities felt the pressure of providing "free" services without additional income. A similar dilemma exists for CBOs. Currently, many CBOs share their resources with fledgling after-school programs. However, CBOs' resources are limited. While the marginal cost of contributing to one after-school program may be small, contributing to many after-school programs in a city would require expanded resources for CBOs.

6. **Policymakers need to shift their thinking from creating *the* program to expanding the set of options available in a community.**
As children become older, they begin to search for a wider range of experiences. This expansion in their worlds is developmentally appropriate, but it means that the participation rates of older youth in any particular program—be it ESS or something else—will likely be relatively low. They are most likely to benefit if they, and their parents, are able to put together a mosaic of positive experiences—broadening the range of activities, widening their geographic horizons, and increasing their network of adults and

peers. If there are several opportunities in their community that attract them, they can still be well served even though no one program seems to be engaging them intensively. As a recently released National Academy of Science report emphasizes, "The diversity of young people, their particular needs and their surrounding environments argue against the notion that a single [type of] program will fit all situations."[2]

Given the increasing challenges to children's lives and the increasingly more complex sets of skills and abilities that are required for success in the workplace of the twenty-first century, we need to revisit how and where we make investments in our nation's children. This report has examined one type of investment—school-based, after-school programs run by CBOs in collaboration with schools. We found that these programs, which are not strictly academic, appear to help participants work on many of the competencies they will need for their future. When well planned and implemented, such programs can be a substantial option within a potentially larger network of diverse programming that provides a range of opportunities for all children and youth.

Endnotes

1. The ESS sites' planning and early implementation experiences are examined in *Extended-Service Schools: Putting Programming in Place*. Karen E. Walker, Jean Grossman and Rebecca Raley. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, December 2000.

2. Jacquelynne Eccles and Jennifer A. Gootman. *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2001.

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I. Introduction

Since the mid-1990s, there has been rapidly increasing public attention to after-school programming. The most visible federal effort, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC), has grown from $40 million in 1998 to the billion dollars signed into law in January 2002. State legislatures have also been quite active. During the past few years, legislatures collectively created 215 statutes that support out-of-school-time initiatives, and almost two-thirds of states directed state funds to local school districts to support after-school programs.[1] As of this year, all states will become involved with after-school programs because the 21st CCLC funds will now be awarded and administered by state education agencies.

Why has there been this explosion of public interest in after-school programming? First, the composition of the workforce has changed over the last generation. There are now more than 50 million working parents. When their children were preschool ages, they created strong political pressure for the government to provide child care and preschool funding. Now their children are in school—and in record numbers. In 1999, the number of children enrolled in school returned to its all-time high of 49 million (set in 1970), and enrollment growth is expected to continue.[2]

Thus, it is not surprising that 8 in 10 voters believe that organized after-school programs are a necessity in their communities, and two-thirds of voters say they are willing to pay $100 more per year in state taxes to help fund the programs. These parents emphasize that they want their children to be in a safe environment and involved in constructive activities with adult supervision.[3] Policymakers share those concerns. Research suggests that when young people are on their own without an adult presence during the after-school hours, they are less safe, more vulnerable to becoming victims or perpetrators of crime, and more likely to become engaged in such high-risk activities as experimenting with alcohol, drugs and sex.[4]

A second powerful force stimulating interest in after-school time is the significant pressure that schools, public officials and politicians have felt to improve student performance. Many school districts have been eliminating "social promotion" policies and implementing stricter academic standards in their

place. The recently passed federal legislation, the "No Child Left Behind Act," reflects this concern. Among other things, it mandates annual testing in reading and math for students in grades 3 through 8, and offers rewards for schools where students succeed on those tests and the possibility of sanctions for schools where students fail.

While, traditionally, schools have educated and socialized children without working closely with others in the community, they are rapidly realizing that they alone cannot achieve the desired educational goals. The needs of the children that schools serve have substantially grown over the last generation. The changing nature of the workplace is demanding that students develop skills far beyond reading and math, including strong communication and problem-solving skills and the ability to work well in teams and to show leadership. At the same time, more children are coming to school with more problems that make it difficult for them to learn. Faced with overcrowded classrooms, mandates to meet required curricular guidelines, and a myriad of learning and behavioral needs among their students, teachers have little opportunity to give these children the kind of one-to-one attention that is necessary if they are going to be able to master concepts, develop self-confidence and experience success in school.

For years, parents who could afford it, and who had access, used local youth programs—enrichment activities, clubs, sports teams and faith-based youth groups—to help support their children's development. Now, parents and the general public are increasingly seeing after-school programs not as something extra, but as an essential support for young people as they grow and develop. School buildings would seem a natural location for these programs. They are situated in the communities, and their facilities—gyms, classrooms, auditoriums, libraries and computer labs—are appropriate for a wide range of activities. In addition, being located in schools would provide programs with ready access to potential participants and offer legitimacy to parents who might feel hesitant about allowing their children to participate in programs elsewhere.

The Extended-Service Schools Initiative

In 1997, amidst this growing interest in after-school programs, the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds launched the Extended-Service Schools Initiative (ESS), which supported the creation of 60 after-school programs in 20 communities around the country. Each community adapted one of four nationally recognized models that had been successfully developed and implemented in other cities around the country.

The models—Beacon, Bridges to Success, Community Schools and West Philadelphia Improvement Corporation (WEPIC)—all seek to promote the well being and positive development of young people in their out-of-school hours, but they differ in organizational structure and management and, to a lesser extent, programmatic emphasis. At the same time, these models share three common features. They all:

- Operate their programs in school buildings.
- Involve partnerships between community-based organizations (and/or universities) and schools. The financial resources are under the control of the partnering organization rather than the school.
- Offer a range of activities to the children and youth who participate, including academic and enrichment activities, and sports and recreation.

(See Appendix A for a description of each model.)

While they vary in structural and even philosophical ways, the models, thus, share essential common elements. The ESS programs built from these models incorporate these commonalities and differences and, in addition, vary widely in size and location. As a result of this "sameness" within variation, ESS provides an almost unique opportunity to identify and examine overarching issues involved in providing opportunities to youth in their after-school time—issues that transcend local context and the formal elements of specific models. In particular, the ESS initiative allows a focus on the following central questions:

- Which children and youth come to after-school programs? Why do they come? Are the

programs attracting the young people who could most benefit from participation?
- What are the characteristics of high-quality activities in these programs—activities that promote the positive development of the children and youth who attend?
- What benefits do the children and youth, and their families, gain from participation?
- What is the cost to operate after-school programs and what are the ways to finance them?

Answers to these questions will be most directly applicable to after-school programs that share the features common to the ESS sites: programs that are school-based and led by a community-based organization (or university) in partnership with a school, and that offer a range of academic and other developmental activities to participants. However, much of the discussion should also be useful in considering other types of after-school programs, whether they are run by the schools themselves in their buildings or offered by community-based organizations (CBOs) in community centers.

The ESS Evaluation

Starting in May 1998, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) and the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) began the evaluation of this large-scale initiative to provide practitioners, funders and policymakers with a rich set of lessons about how local, school-based collaborations unfold and what they do. The evaluation used a multi-method approach designed to provide both an understanding of the breadth of programming experiences and the ability to delve more deeply into particular issues. (See Appendix B for a complete description of the research methodology.)

To learn about the activities of all the ESS programs, we asked all the school site coordinators and city-level program directors to complete annual organizational surveys summarizing what their programs were doing. To gain deeper insight into individual sites and learn about promising practices, we conducted multiple in-depth site visits to 10 cities during 1999-2000, interviewing staff, partners, students, parents and key city officials.

We also focused intensively on a total of 10 programs in six of these cities, where we made additional visits during 2000-2001. We collected computerized attendance records from the programs; gathered cost data; and administered a baseline questionnaire to all fourth- through eighth-grade students between Fall 1999 and the end of 2000 as they enrolled in the program.[5] In Spring 2001, we administered a follow-up survey to fourth- through eighth-grade students who had ever enrolled in ESS and were still in the school (although not necessarily currently participating in ESS). A telephone survey of a sample of those students' parents was also conducted to learn about the program from their perspective.

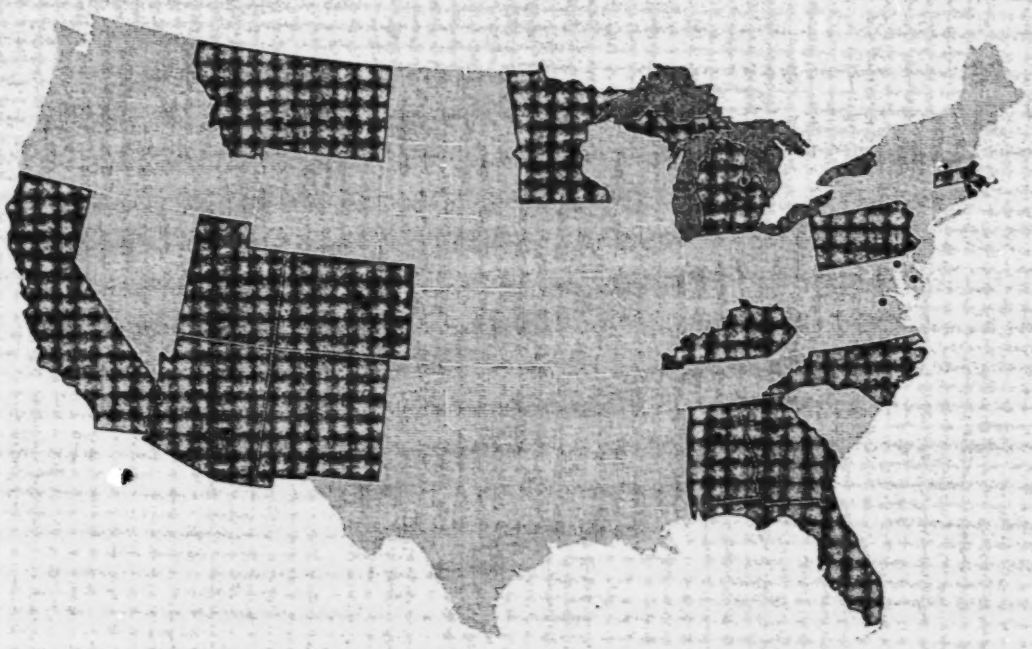
Lastly, in three of those 10 schools, we conducted multiple observations of the activities and open-ended interviews with 30 child-teacher-and-parent triads to collect in-depth information about the quality of the activities and the ways the program fit into the lives of children (see Figure 1, for the locations of the ESS programs and the locations of the six cities where we conducted the intensive research.)

The Organization of this Report

Two previous reports discussed early findings from the evaluation, focusing on the ESS sites' planning and early implementation periods, and their initial challenges and accomplishments.[6] This report focuses on the experiences "on the ground" of the still young but maturing programs.

The next chapter, Chapter II, draws on information from across all of the ESS sites to provide background information about the after-school programs. The following chapters more sharply focus on the 10 programs which we examined in greater depth. Chapter III describes who participated in the programs, how often they came and why. Chapter IV looks closely at the activities offered in three of those programs in order to describe qualities of participants' after-school experiences that most likely appear to contribute to positive youth development. Chapter IV also discusses the ways in which, and extent to which, those qualities were manifested in the after-school activities we observed.

Figure 1:
Extended-Service Schools Adaption Sites



Beacons	Bridges to Success	Community Schools	WEPIC
Denver, CO	Flint, MI	Boston, MA*	Albuquerque, NM
Minneapolis, MN*	Missoula, MT*	Long Beach, CA	Atlanta, GA
Oakland, CA	Greensboro,NC	Salt Lake City, UT	Aurora, CO*
Savannah, GA*	Philadelphia, PA		Birmingham, AL
	Jacksonville, FL		Denver, CO
	Central falls, RI*		Lexington, KY
	Mesa, AZ		

* Indicates cities where the 10 intensive research ESS programs are located.

Chapter V discusses benefits to the children and youth who participated in the after-school activities at the 10 intensive research sites. Chapter VI examines the costs and funding of those programs, as well as strategies the sites are using to develop funding to sustain their programs into the future. A final chapter offers conclusions and a discussion of lessons learned.

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II. It Starts With a Vision

It used to be that anyone walking into a school at 2:30 p.m. would see students and teachers finished for the day and preparing for a mass exodus. But now, in schools across the country, the afternoon bell marks not an end, but the beginning of an extended day.

At 2:30 p.m., a visitor who steps inside one of the 60 schools hosting ESS programs—in this particular case, a middle school—might see students flooding out into the hallways, their noise level marking the end of their traditional school day. Some quickly head for home, but many others remain. These students make brief stops at their lockers and then head for the school cafeteria, where they pick up a healthy snack and check-in with their friends for a few minutes.

From 3 to 4 p.m., the students are back on task. Fifty stay in the cafeteria to participate in Power Hour, a time for finishing homework with the help of work-study students from the local university. Others return to their classrooms for tutoring. Working with their school-day teachers, who are paid extra to stay late, small groups of four to seven students receive the focused attention they need to master the concepts that have been introduced during the school day. Today, an additional 10 students are exempt from homework time because they have their monthly Youth Council meeting. The council's agenda includes discussions about advertising for their upcoming community clean-up day of service and brainstorming to generate fundraising ideas for financing pizzas at their proposed teen dance night.

At 4 p.m., students in each of these groups again shift gears to spend the following hour in a fun activity of their choice. In one room, 18 students join the Game Club instructor to play chess, backgammon and monopoly. In the gym, an athletic instructor from the local YMCA helps students organize into teams and begin a lively game of flag football.

At the same time, in the school's home economics room, girls who are both new to the school and new to the country participate in what they call their Sweet 13 Club. Designed by program staff who recognized the challenges of assimilation faced by the school's population of new immigrants, the club gives the girls an opportunity to make food, crafts and jewelry, as well as share in conversations about their transition experiences.

Other offerings today include a Computer Club, Science Club and Drill Team. The Drill Team is especially popular—participants are working on a routine for the end of the year Family Showcase, a night when family members are invited to the school to celebrate their children's accomplishments.

It is 5 p.m. when the students finally pack their bags and head outside to catch the school's late bus home or wait for parents to pick them up. And while the ESS programs are all different in the specific programming they offer, they do, across the sites, provide similar kinds of constructive activities within the safe and familiar environments of school buildings.

The following pages present an overview of those programs across all of the ESS sites. To provide a context for the discussions in the remainder of the report, this chapter briefly describes what was involved in getting the programs started, their goals and offerings, the roles of partners and key staff, and how the programs have matured over time.[7]

How Were the After-School Programs Started?

The after-school programs began with a vision, a relatively small amount of money, committed partners and a lot of persistence. Initial planning time was critical. The ESS programs each received a grant of $25,000 to $50,000 for a six- to nine-month planning period that allowed them to convene partners, assess community needs, strengthen relationships across organizations, pool additional community and financial resources, and make early decisions about program implementation. Once implemented, programs operated the first year on an additional $80,000 to $300,000.

Technical assistance can facilitate program start-up and implementation; and, importantly, all of the ESS programs received technical assistance as part of their involvement in the initiative. The organizations that had originally developed each of the four models essentially acted as management consultants, sharing after-school resources with cities and helping to address specific concerns.[8] At the request of a program partner, staff from these organizations would visit programs, assess operations and make recommendations about how to address challenges. During the planning stage, they also gave local ESS planners the opportunity to visit active programs in other cities, and this helped to transmit a concrete vision of how after-school programs operate. In addition, they also hosted annual cross-site conferences that promoted sharing of information and generated enthusiasm on the part of participants.

Why Were Partnerships Important?

Partnerships were central to developing ESS at each site and were expected to serve several important functions. These included:

- Drawing on the existing resources and youth-serving expertise of multiple organizations;
- Avoiding service duplication and service gaps among youth-serving organizations; and
- Creating a stronger foundation for sustainability.

Among the sites, the composition of these partnerships varied to some extent, at least in part because each of the four ESS models had a different approach to promoting after-school collaborations (see box).

Collaborative Focus of the Models

The ESS programs are based on four different, nationally recognized models of after-school programs. Each model, in turn, is built on a somewhat different approach to collaboration:

Beacon:
Schools + fiscal CBO + lead agency CBO

Bridges to Success:
Schools + CBOs + local United Way

Community Schools:
Schools + CBO + a university

WEPIC:
Schools + a university

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Whatever the model on which a particular site based its program, partners were initially attracted to ESS for a variety of different reasons. Roughly a third came because they viewed ESS as an opportunity to strengthen school-community partnerships. Another third viewed ESS as an opportunity to expand what their own organizations were doing—ESS held promise for generating additional funding and physical resources, such as the use of school space for activities. The final third came to the partnerships simply because they were invited.

Over the course of the planning period and first year of implementation, some of these initial partners decided to be more involved than others, and a few eventually decided not to participate. However, the reasons behind organizations' initial motivation to become involved did not predict their future involvement.

Ultimately, many organizations became partners in the initiative. CBOs represented a range of youth-serving groups, including the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the YMCA, and Campfire Boys and Girls. Institutions and agencies such as art museums, city libraries, and parks and recreation services also joined the partnerships. Other partners included the mayor's office, county planning and grants offices, local businesses and rotary clubs—all of which were potential sources of contributed support or of assistance with fundraising. In some cases, partners played dual roles as both providers and funders of service.

Because ESS programs operate within school buildings, schools were especially critical partners. They were the gatekeepers to school space; contributed significant amounts of support, even beyond the use of their facilities; and often assisted in program development and youth recruitment by sharing curriculum ideas and supporting in-school student referral systems for ESS. In addition, administrators at the school district level were positioned to promote program expansion to other schools and, in some cases, to funnel state education dollars into programs.

What Types of Schools Host the Programs?

Because out-of-school supervision needs are greatest for younger youth, almost all of the after-school programs were implemented in elementary and middle schools. Across the ESS programs, six take place in high schools, while 24 are in middle schools or junior high schools, and 22 are located in elementary schools.[9]

These ESS schools are typical of urban schools across the country. They serve high proportions of minority and low-income youth, students' academic performance is reported to be low, and turnover among principals is relatively high—almost two-thirds of the schools have had two or more principals in the past five years. However, the neighborhoods in which the schools are situated can look very different from one another. For example, a middle school in Aurora, Colorado, is situated in a low-income, largely Hispanic neighborhood marked by wide streets and small one-level homes with modest yards and narrow driveways. A middle school in North Philadelphia, also predominately Hispanic, is located on a heavily trafficked bus route surrounded by small businesses, fast food chains and unbroken lines of rowhomes scarred by the occasional abandoned house.

In some of the larger school systems, like Minneapolis, students are bused to school from many different neighborhoods. This transportation factor added an additional dimension of challenge to the task of recruiting youth and arranging for them to stay after school. In smaller school districts and elementary schools, the fact that many students lived within walking distance alleviated, to some extent, this possible barrier to participation.[10]

What Are the Goals of the Programs?

Across the ESS sites, project directors and site coordinators identified a number of major goals for their programs, including:

- Improving youth's academic performance;
- Providing an opportunity for youth to use their out-of-school time safely and productively;
- Providing an opportunity for youth to develop positive relations with peers and adults;

- Having parents become more involved in their children's lives and schooling;
- Keeping youth off the streets and out of trouble; and
- Providing youth with athletic and cultural experiences to enrich their lives.

What Activities Do the After-School Programs Offer?

To meet these goals, ESS planners in each city worked creatively with their host schools to fill gap times for children and youth. Although called "after-school" programs, ESS activities also run before and during the school day and throughout the year, including when school is not in session. All of the ESS programs offer after-school activities. In addition, 70 percent offer summer programs; just over half offer weekend activities; and 37 percent offer activities during the school day, generally during lunch time. Twenty percent of the programs offer activities during school-year vacations, and 14 percent offer before-school activities.

This report focuses exclusively on the programs during the after-school hours. It is important to note that these programs are very diverse. In fact, one of the advantages of school-based, after-school programs is that they can be tailored to the specific population of each particular school. But at the same time, the types of activities in which youth engage are generally similar across the sites.

In almost all of those programs, academic activities are a primary focus—they include tutoring, homework help, and specific academic classes like environmental science and computers.[11] Cultural enrichment activities such as art, music, sports and recreational activities like karate and open-gym time are also staples in most programs. ESS staff have recognized the importance of giving youth recreational or down time after school, and those activities are often offered immediately after academic sessions like tutoring and homework help because they give students an incentive to complete schoolwork.

Free-time activities such as snack-time or teen hang-out time are offered at more than half of the programs, as are community service activities and specific classes to promote youth leadership and decision-making. However, fewer hours are spent on these. Free-time activities sometimes run for just 15 to 30 minutes a day, and community service projects like cleaning a park or visiting a home for senior citizens are often offered just one day a month. Activities designed to help students with career preparation are the least common. This is primarily because the majority of youth served by ESS are not yet in high school, the time when career preparation activities are most important.[12]

How Do the Sites Attempt to Involve Parents?

Parents have been involved in the ESS initiative in a number of ways. As the programs were being planned, sites attempted to recruit parents to be part of that process.[13] In addition, many of the sites see part of their mission as serving the larger community, not just school-aged youth. During the first year of ESS, activities for youth were the main focus. However, as these activities got off the ground and stabilized, programming for parents and other community residents received increasing attention. By the third year of the initiative, almost half (46%) of the ESS programs were offering adult classes, which have included academic support courses like GED preparation, English-as-a-Second Language, parenting skills and health education. Several programs also offer enrichment classes such as sewing, aerobics and tennis. At some of the sites, staff planned their adult classes by conducting parent surveys that asked about activity preferences.

Beyond offering these separate weekend and evening sessions for parents, program staff worked to involve parents in their children's experiences in the after-school programs. While recognizing that parent involvement is typically one of the most difficult challenges faced by schools, ESS staff found that maintaining contact with parents helps promote student engagement, positive behavior and stronger academic performance. They also found this type of outreach is consistently valued by school principals.

Programs have implemented different strategies to engage parents. Some sites send home newsletters, call parents with updates and concerns, or chat with parents who come to pick up their children. A few programs regularly invite parents to the school for

coffee and snacks, and some hold family celebrations or parties once or twice a year. Family celebrations served to showcase student accomplishments through performances and awards presentations, and staff feel this approach makes parents' time at the school especially positive.

How Are the Programs Staffed?

Strong staffing is a core element of effective after-school programs. Across the sites, staff include:

- **A program director.** The program director administers one or more after-school programs in a city and is responsible for the broader external tasks of forming partnerships, overseeing other staff, managing the budget, and raising funds to implement, sustain and expand the programming. Approximately three-fifths of the ESS cities have full-time program directors; the others have part-time directors. Strong full-time directors with skills in diplomacy, networking and staff leadership seem pivotal in generating program stability and success.

- **A site coordinator**. At the school-level, most programs hired a full- or part-time site coordinator, who is responsible for implementing and administering the program at the school. This involves leading recruitment and enrollment efforts, planning and scheduling the youth activities, identifying activity providers, communicating with parents, and providing daily oversight of the program, including handling the logistics of arranging transportation home for participants and covering custodial needs. Because coordinators are usually located in an office at the school, they also serve as strategic intermediaries between school staff and partnering agencies.

- **Activity providers.** Whether teaching jewelry making, running a math club, coaching frisbee-golf or leading a book group, enthusiastic and caring activity providers bring the after-school programs to life. They include staff from partnering agencies, teachers from the school, independent professionals, community residents and college students. Typically working just 2 to 10 hours a week, they are often hired relatively inexpensively, yet play a vital role.

  One essential task the programs face is orienting the activity providers toward positive youth development philosophies and practices. These front-line staff spend more time with youth than do other program personnel but are sometimes only in the school a few hours a week. To ensure program quality, directors and site coordinators have to maintain ongoing communication with the activity providers, sponsor trainings and conduct regular activity reviews.

Across the sites, a panoply of additional staff support the after-school programs. Some have full-time support staff to handle clerical work and provide administrative aide. In addition, some sites contract with school security officers and janitors to allow for continued safety and clean-up at the end of the school day.

The sites also receive essential administrative support from their lead agencies—the CBOs or universities with whom they are collaborating. In general, the agencies contribute 2 to 10 hours a week; and this assistance from account managers, payroll staff, data collection specialists, grant writers and administrative assistants helps programs with fundraising and their ongoing financial operations.

Finally, programs also recruit volunteers to fill gaps in services. These include VISTA and AmeriCorps volunteers who help coordinate and provide youth activities; high school and college tutors who run homework and academic support sessions; and adult volunteers who serve as mentors for higher-needs youth.

Almost three-quarters (71%) of the programs report having 11 or more volunteers contribute their time during the course of a program year. The presence of these volunteers has helped lower the adult-student ratio during activities and provided additional opportunities for youth to form relationships with adults or young adults. However, programs also reported facing challenges in connection with their volunteers, including clearly defining volunteer roles, providing training and support so the volunteers can perform well in those roles, and having the volunteers show up consistently. These challenges are fairly

typical for organizations that rely on volunteers for the provision of ongoing, direct services.

How Have the Programs Matured?

During the three years the sites have been up and running, they have been strengthening their relationships with the schools and improving the quality of their programming.

In our two earlier reports, we documented the challenges of developing relationships between schools and the agencies running after-school programs.[14] Most of the youth-serving organizations began as guests in the schools, and it took time for schools and agencies to develop common understandings about the roles of the after-school programs and how they would operate.

Creating ways of sharing and maintaining school space was especially critical. After-school programs needed regular access to classrooms and other space for activities, while schools needed assurance that those spaces would be well maintained. The costs of added wear and tear on school facilities caused by their additional use was not anticipated in the original grant proposals. Some programs addressed the issue by renegotiating custodians' schedules so they would be available in the evening; some made arrangements to hire custodians for additional hours. Establishing these logistics proved essential for strengthening the school-program relationships.

By their third year of operations, only two of the programs were experiencing any real difficulty in working with school districts; and almost three-quarters of the programs reported that the school districts were "willing or very willing" to accommodate the needs of ESS. In many cases, these relationships had grown stronger over time. More than three-fifths (61%) of the programs said school district support had increased over the past two years.

The developing relationships were apparent to school personnel and ESS staff alike. Principals said they were pleased with their level of communication with program staff and, in several cases, noted that they considered ESS staff to be school staff. In those schools, along with some others, ESS staff were invited to attend school faculty meetings.

Similarly, after-school staff reported feeling more welcomed in the school and said that they worked hard to keep school administrators up to date on their program operations. The vast majority (83%) of site coordinators met informally at least once a month with the principal or assistant principal, and three-fifths also had regularly scheduled formal meetings. ESS staff also noted that their programs had become more widely recognized in the schools, helped, in part, by access to the schools' public-address systems and by establishing procedures that encouraged teachers and counselors to refer youth to the programs.

As the ESS sites have matured, they have also become more able to identify and address their core programming goals. In the survey administered in Spring 2001, 55 percent of site coordinators reported that over the course of three years, their programs increased their focus on youth development, and 49 percent reported an increased focused on academics. (The answers were not mutually exclusive.)

A number of programs also became more invested in developing ways to monitor activity quality, by using three approaches: programs established formal proposal review systems for selecting which activities would be allowed to run; site coordinators conducted formal or informal activity observations and then gave feedback to staff; and provider staff and students were given opportunities at the end of sessions to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of specific activities.

However, establishing and maintaining formal systems created additional work for coordinators, who were already very busy. For this reason, even during their third year, some programs had still not set up a system of assessing activity quality and, instead, relied on informal student, staff and parent comments about how activities were going.

During the past three years, the programs' growth was marked by both challenges and accomplishments. The following chapters focus on findings from 10 of the programs to examine what they have accomplished and how, and where the ongoing challenges reside.

III. Who Comes to the After-School Programs?

The most fundamental goals of the ESS programs were to serve as safe places for children and youth in the after-school hours, and to provide opportunities and supports that would help them develop academic and social skills. Thus, participation patterns—who came to the programs and how often they came—are the first indication of how well the programs would be able to accomplish their goals.

A number of factors can affect participation patterns. The most obvious have to do with program characteristics. The ESS planners all had to make decisions about the goals and design of their programs that ultimately had an effect on which children and youth chose to participate and how often they attended.

At each site, planners had to decide, for example, whether the program should function, in part, as child care for parents; whether some activities, such as tutoring, would be required for everyone who enrolled; and whether students would be required to enroll for five days a week of activities or could choose to attend only on the days that offered the activities most appealing to them.

Viewed in this context, parents' choosing to register their children for ESS and youth's participation can be interpreted as signals of how well the programs' structures and activities fit with the particular needs and desires of the communities they served. (See sidebar on next page for an overview of sites' recruitment strategies, another factor that influences participation.)

While information on the extent to which youth participate in after-school programs is now beginning to emerge,[15] much remains to be understood concerning the factors that affect participation and how to best increase the likelihood of meaningful levels of attendance. As community-designed, school-based programs, the ESS sites' early experiences with participation patterns seem likely to provide lessons that can be useful to new and developing after-school programs around the country.

The following chapter thus explores four fundamental questions:

- Which children and youth participated in the after-school activities?
- How often did they attend?
- What factors helped account for the patterns of participation?
- What are the implications of these findings for policy and practice?

Recruiting Students for the After-School Programs

Recruitment strategies have an obvious influence on who participates; and in developing their strategies, ESS staff were sensitive to the obstacles that could prevent youth from enrolling in programs. The most obvious barriers are that parents may not be aware that the programs exist, unaware of key features such as whether the activities are free or unsure how to go about registering their children.

Thus, ESS staff conducted outreach and registration activities in a variety of ways, with the aim of maximizing students' and parents' knowledge of the programs and increasing the convenience of the registration process. Their strategies included:

- Mailing notices about ESS to parents and sending notices home with the children over a period that generally extended for two or three weeks before and after the start of activities.
- Providing information about ESS through direct contact by calling parents at home or talking to them when they came to pick up their children at school.
- Holding open houses in the evening where parents could hear about activities in the upcoming semester and sign their children up on the spot.
- Holding information and registration sessions in public housing complexes where many of the students lived.
- Translating notices into appropriate languages in communities where children's parents spoke languages other than English.

The chapter draws on information concerning 1,511 first to eighth graders who enrolled in the ESS participation study at the 10 intensive research sites between Fall 1999 and December 2000. Data include program-provided participation records, demographic information provided by parents on the enrollment forms, and responses to surveys completed by the youth and their parents.[16]

Who Enrolled?

Even as relatively new options, the ESS programs seem to have been attractive to the children and parents in their schools. As early as the 1999-2000 school year (in most cases, the second year of operations), 8 of the 10 programs considered themselves to be operating at capacity—serving as many students as they could within their available resources. Interest in the after-school programs was so high, relative to available resources, that three of those programs capped their enrollments during one or both of the years covered by this study. And one program, in its effort to meet the demand for registration, limited the number of days a week for which youth could register.

Across the 10 sites, programs served an average of 63 youth a day. In most of the sites, however, different youth attended on different days of the week, so the number of individual youth served is much higher. In fact, across the eight sites that collected participation data on all youth who were enrolled in ESS (not just those enrollees who were registered for this study), slightly more than half of the schools' total populations were participating in the after-school programs.

In general, the ESS participants reflected the populations of their schools. As Table 1 illustrates, across the schools, participants were quite diverse and from families that had a range of income and educational achievement. At the same time, the sites were generally successful in reaching out to low-income families for whom free, school-based programs such as ESS may be a valuable resource, providing safe, supervised places for their children to be after school, as well as an array of perhaps otherwise unaffordable activities. Almost three-quarters of families had incomes of $30,000 or less, and almost the same proportion were eligible for free or reduced price lunch.

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Table 1:
Selected Family and Background Characteristics of ESS Participants

Gender	
Female	54.7%
Male	45.3%
Average age in years	10.3
Ethnicity*	
White	40.1%
African-American	32.7%
Hispanic	19.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7.7%
Native American	3.0%
Other	3.8%
Child lives in single-parent household	41.1%
Parent education	
Not a high school graduate	22.4%
Some college/community college	30.0%
College/community college graduate	23.7%
Annual household income	
$14,000 or less	37.5%
$30,000 or less	73.9%
Child receives free/ reduced-price lunch	71.8%

* Ethnicity categories are not mutually exclusive and, thus, do not add up to 100 percent.

Source: Intake data collected from parents or guardians at the time of enrollment into study.

The Special Challenges of Attracting High-Needs Youth

Although they were successful in recruiting low-income youth who reflected the demographics of their schools, the ESS programs felt they needed to do more to attract and serve the most high-needs youth—those who were disengaged from school, failing courses and exhibiting negative behaviors. These youth are typically difficult to draw in and retain in after-school programs. They are less likely than youth with fewer problems to be comfortable in organized programs, and may resist school-based activities if they are experiencing problems with learning. In addition, their parents may also be under stress and less likely to have time to focus on the details of the program and registration.

Staff and partners at the ESS programs were keenly aware of the characteristics of students who were less likely to enroll in the after-school activities. One teacher noted:

> *I think some of them don't have good reading skills so they don't want to do another hour of reading after school.*

And a staff member at a partnering agency said:

> *With the after-school program, it's seemed to only hit the kids with highly functional parents who are getting the applications back...It's the kid that doesn't have a parent who can read that we're missing.*

In contrast, as one principal said, students who do tend to enroll are those who "would take advantage of any opportunity there was." And one teacher noted:

> *They [the most likely ESS participants] are more confident...They're bigger risk takers. I think they've had more opportunities outside of school. They've had Brownies or Scouts...They've gone camping, and they want to do it again.*

To engage greater numbers of the most high-needs youth, ESS staff developed targeted strategies to specifically address some of their barriers to participation (see sidebar on next page). These efforts do seem to have resulted in gains, at least as suggested by an increase in the proportion of ESS youth who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. During the two years of this study, the number of enrollees in that category increased from 66 to 72 percent—a percentage that almost precisely reflected the demographics of the schools. But despite these successes, programs recognize that the youth most in need of academic and developmental support typically still do not join, and they continue to look for new approaches for reaching them.

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Strategies for Attracting High-Needs Youth

ESS programs developed several strategies to increase their ability to attract high-needs youth. For example, some programs:

- Worked closely with teachers and other school staff to identify and encourage such students to enroll. In addition, at some sites, teachers recommended the program to parents during parent-teacher conferences.
- Reserved enrollment slots for high-needs youth who were referred to the program in this way. This was essential in programs where the number of registrants was capped. Otherwise, all slots might be filled by youth whose families were more comfortable and familiar with organized activities and, thus, quicker to register.
- Hired staff to lead activities that had personal characteristics to draw in youth who were disengaged in school. These staff tended to be representative of participants in gender and race, and closer to them in age.

Some programs also offered opportunities for less-structured activities, such as open-gym activities or teen rooms, to attract youth who might feel more comfortable in a casual environment.

How Often Did Youth Attend?

Two of the major policy concerns driving the interest in after-school programs are the desire to provide youth with academic and developmental supports and opportunities, and to keep them safe during the after-school hours. Thus, it is important to know whether enrollees are attending often enough to make these goals attainable.

Table 2 describes youth's attendance rates and patterns across the 10 programs in the study. In a typical semester, participants were, on average, registered for 33 days of the program, or roughly three days a week, and they attended almost two-thirds (63%) of those days. This attendance rate translates to 20 days of participation per semester, or about two days a week. However, averages for the 10 schools were strongly affected by high levels of participation at one school. If that school is excluded, the average number of scheduled days drops from 33 to 27, and average days present drops from 20 to 15.

It is important to note that many youth participated in ESS over time, not just for one semester. More than a third (35%) attended the after-school program for all four semesters of the study. Nearly half (49%) participated for three semesters, and 84 percent participated during two semesters. Thus, there was opportunity for a cumulative effect from the program's activities and supports.[17] But there were also gaps in registration when former participants did not re-enroll. This was particularly true from one school year to the next, when spring enrollees did not return for the following fall semester. While we do not have direct information on why students did not continue in ESS from semester to semester, one likely contributing reason is the high level of student mobility that characterizes schools in poor neighborhoods.

When considering the extent of participation in ESS and its potential benefits, it is also important to keep in mind that many of the youth were engaged in other activities in addition to ESS. In fact, participants reported they typically spent one or two more days a week in organized after-school activities in settings other than school. However, even while they said they spent much of their after-school time in supervised settings, a non-trivial proportion of their time was unsupervised—more than half of the youth typically spent some part of their after-school hours each week without adult supervision. (The way youth spend their after-school time will be discussed more fully later in this chapter.)

What Factors Help Explain Participation Patterns?

Across the 10 sites, there was wide variation in the number of days youth attended the after-school programs during a typical semester. The average number of days that youth scheduled for ESS ranged from 18.6 to 84.6 across the 10 programs; their attendance rates varied from 34.4 percent to 73.9 percent; and the number of days they actually attended ranged from 10 to 62.

Three key, sometimes interrelated factors seemed to contribute to these variations: the ages of the youth; choices made by programs about whether they would require five-day-a-week enrollment; and preferences of both youth and their parents concerning how the youth spend their after-school hours.

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Table 2:
Participation in a Typical Semester of ESS, Overall and by Grade

	Full Sample	Grades 1-3	Grades 4-5	Grades 6-8
Average days program was open per semester	59.5	60.3	60.8	58.1
Average days scheduled by participant per semester	33.0	38.2	32.6	28.7
Average days present per semester	20.0	28.1	21.2	13.4
Average days present per week	1.9	2.2	1.9	1.6
Distribution of average days present per semester (by percent of youth):				
1-4 days	14.4%	6.8%	7.4%	23.5%
5-19 days	51.6%	47.0%	54.7%	53.3%
20-39 days	21.2%	21.7%	23.8%	19.6%
40 or more days	12.8%	24.5%	14.1%	3.6%
Average youth attendance rate—days present of days scheduled (%)	63.0%	72.6%	66.8%	53.9%

Source: Site-entered participation data for 1,511 youth for 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years. Includes only youth who participated for at least one day.

Age of Participants

The strongest predictor of greater participation was the age range of the youth. In a typical ESS session, younger children attended, on average, substantially more days than older youth. As Table 2 illustrates, in a typical session, younger children were both scheduled for more days of participation and had a higher attendance rate. For example, children in grades 1 to 3 attended, on average, 28 days (73% of their scheduled days), while sixth through eighth graders attended an average of only 13 days (a 54% attendance rate).[18]

In addition, a much higher percentage of those younger enrollees attended for more days during a typical semester. Among the participants in grades 1 to 3, 46 percent attended for 20 or more days. However, among sixth to eighth graders, only 23 percent of enrollees attended 20 or more days, and almost a quarter attended four days or fewer.

Parents' concerns seemed to influence their children's attendance patterns, and those concerns tended to correlate with their children's ages. When asked why they registered their child in ESS, parents of children in grades 1 to 3 were far more likely than parents of middle school students to say that they had done so because the program offered opportunities for academic improvement and provided a safe place for their child to be after school. And it was parents who cited these reasons for enrollment whose children attended more days of ESS—15 days or more in a typical semester.[19]

Mandatory versus Flexible Enrollment Policies

ESS planners at each site had to make a number of decisions about programming that would influence which students ultimately enrolled in the after-school activities and how often they attended. For example, planners who decided that the program should serve, in part, as child care for parents would be more likely to mandate, or at least allow, five-day-a-week enrollment. Planners who decided that tutoring would be a daily required activity for each participant might, through this decision, discourage youth from attending who felt the most frustrated with academics and wanted to avoid any additional classroom-like work.

Planners' decisions inevitably involved some trade-offs. Perhaps the most obvious example of this concerns the choice of whether to require five-day-a-week

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Increasing Attendance Rates

After-school programs that require five-day-a-week enrollment often struggle with low attendance rates. However, one ESS program has been able to achieve a high attendance rate (72%) despite its five-day-a-week mandate. There are several factors that contribute to its success. The program:

- **Serves children in grades k-5.** Elementary school-age students typically attend their scheduled after-school activities more frequently than do older youth. In part, this may be because the children have to attend when their working parents rely on the program for child care.
- **Enforces a strict attendance policy.** The program communicates its expectation that enrolled students will participate every day. It limits slots to 117 children and has a waiting list of others who want to enroll. Thus, children scheduled but not attending are literally depriving other students and families of services.
- **Provides a strong link between the after-school activities and the in-school experiences of students.** The program has a strong academic focus, and many of the participants are recommended by their teachers based on academic and youth development needs.

In addition, the program is required by one of its funding sources to charge participants' families a fee, with amounts varying based on a family's ability to pay. (The average rate is approximately $20 per week, but some families pay as little as $2.) Since parents are paying for the program's services, they may take extra measures to ensure that their children attend.

Finally, the program provides bus transportation home each day, although bus schedules require that students needing transportation leave more than an hour before the program ends.

registration or to allow, or even mandate, more flexible scheduling.

Programs that require registration for five days a week have, not surprisingly, resulted in more days of attendance for participants than flexible programs that permit registration for fewer days.

However, there are also suggestions that, overall, greater numbers of low-income students participate when they have the option of scheduling activities for fewer than five days a week.[20]

The 10 ESS programs included in this study are spread across the continuum of "five-day-a week" to "flexible" approaches to registration, and their place on the continuum may explain some of the variation in patterns exhibited across the schools that extend beyond differences in the ages of participants.

Three of the 10 programs offered activities five days a week and generally did not permit registration only for selected days. In those programs, participants, on average, attended for more days than at the other sites. However, two of the three also had the lowest attendance rates (average attendance of lower than 40%) among all 10 programs.

These low rates of attendance suggest that scheduling for five days without enforcing an attendance policy increases the likelihood that youth will not show up regularly. However, other factors might also have contributed. The five-day-a-week site with high attendance rates was an elementary school, while participants at the other two sites were middle school students. Unlike the elementary school program, the middle school sites did not have a well-articulated—and enforced—attendance policy. In addition, the middle school programs did not provide transportation home at the end of the after-school day, a factor that could discourage attendance on days when alternate forms of transportation were unavailable. (See sidebar for a description of the elementary school program's strategies for achieving high attendance rates.)

The other seven programs allowed selective registration for activities offered only on certain days (or, in the case of one site, limited registration to fewer days than the program was open). This flexible enrollment policy helped programs meet the demand for services and, perhaps, allowed them to increase the variety of their offerings. The programs would, for example, schedule a dance class on Monday and Wednesday and a chess club on Tuesday and Thursday. Parents would then register their children for specific activities and not others; and, as a result, the children often enrolled for fewer days than the programs were open.

These practices increased the number of youth who participated in the programs, and they may also have

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helped attract a greater range of youth because they could enroll only for the specific activities that appealed to them. The tradeoff, however, was that individual youth participated for fewer days each week and, thus, were less often in the "safe haven" of after-school programming, with its potential for providing academic and developmental supports and opportunities. In addition, flexible enrollment policies may limit the after-school program's usefulness to parents with child care needs.

Interestingly, among parents who completed a survey in Spring 2001, a high percentage (42%) cited the effect of program policies limiting participation as a key reason for their child not attending more frequently, suggesting that, in sites which limited enrollment, many parents would have liked their children to be able to enroll for more days.

Youth's and Parents' Explanations of Why Youth Did Not Attend More Often

Youth, of course, have a voice in how they spend their time after school, and these preferences also seemed to affect participation rates. In the Spring 2001 surveys, ESS enrollees and their parents were asked why the youth did not attend more often, including why they did not schedule ESS for more days a week and why they did not attend a higher percentage of their scheduled activities. Table 3 lists their most frequent responses (they could give multiple reasons).

Table 3:
Youth and Parent Reports:
Why Youth Did Not Attend ESS More Often

Youth Report	
Had other things to do elsewhere	28%
Not interested in activities, or friends did not attend	18%
Did not have a way to get home	15%
Did not like treatment by staff or other students	11%
Parent Report	
My child had other things to do elsewhere	42%
My child did not like the activities, or friends did not attend	23%
My child did not like treatment by staff or by other students	15%
No transportation available for getting home after the program	15%

The youth who attended ESS the fewest days in a typical session were significantly more likely to have given the first reason for their non-attendance—they had other things to do elsewhere. (See sidebar for what those "other things" included.) While they generally expressed positive attitudes about the ESS activities as interesting and as valued sources of new learning and skills, they also made it clear that there were a number of ways they spent their after-school time and that these could draw them away from ESS.

It is important to note that it was older youth, rather than children, who were more inclined to give the second reason for non-attendance—they were not interested in the activities. Alternative activities available to them are likely to be more varied than for younger children; for example, they may have more types of team sports to choose from. And older youth indicated more often than younger children that they simply went home or to a friend's house after school. In addition, parents of older children may allow them to more frequently "opt out" of organized activities. Children in grades 1 to 3 are, obviously, far less likely than middle-schoolers to make independent choices about how to spend their after-school time.

How ESS Youth Allocated Their After-School Hours

Fourth to eighth graders responding to a survey in Spring 2001 described how they spent their after-school hours during the previous week. They reported that they spent:

- 1.8 days, on average, in organized activities, such as ESS, at their school.
- 1.4 days in organized activities at locations other than the school.
- .5 days in school for other reasons, such as using the library or talking to a teacher.
- 3.2 days at their own or a friend's home, or at the home of a sitter or relative.

(Numbers add up to greater than five days because youth may have spent time in different ways in a single day.)

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As Table 3 indicates, parents' explanations for why their children did not more often attend ESS generally supported reasons given by the youth. Two of these reasons for non-attendance—the child not liking the activities and a lack of transportation home—were predictors of attendance patterns. Both were cited significantly more often by the parents of children with low attendance.

What are the Implications of these Findings for Policy and Practice?

Even in their early years of operations, the ESS programs succeeded in attracting significant numbers of the young people in their schools and, in fact, were in most cases filled to the capacity of their resources. The participants generally mirrored the populations of their schools—for the most part, they were children from low-income families. The ESS programs' successes and challenges in recruiting participants suggest the following "lessons" for policymakers and program practitioners:

- ***Some groups of children and youth are more likely than others to be attracted to school-based, after-school programs.*** In ESS, as has also been found in other after-school programs, younger children attended more frequently than older youth. In addition, the students who were most easily recruited for the program tended to be those who were already "joiners." As the programs developed, staff began to more specifically target some of their recruitment strategies toward attracting the most high-needs youth (the "non-joiners"), students who were failing courses, were disengaged from school and had behavior problems.

  The "safe haven" and academic and developmental opportunities offered by after-school programs could be particularly valuable for both older youth and higher-needs children and youth. However, engaging them in structured activities after school at levels that could help lead to skill-building and developmental progress is difficult. It seems likely that after-school programs, in general, would benefit from more information on attracting and serving older youth and children and youth who have the greatest needs.

- ***There are tradeoffs involved in the decision whether to require participation for four or five days each week or to allow youth to schedule their after-school activities more flexibly.*** In shaping the content and requirements of their programs, the ESS planners made decisions that influenced how many youth and which youth enrolled and how often they attended. Requiring five-day-a-week enrollment obviously increased both the number of scheduled days and days attended, but allowing youth to register for only a few days a week meant that programs could serve a greater number and, perhaps also, a more diverse group of youth. The ESS programs also found that requiring five-day-a-week enrollment resulted in low attendance rates unless they had a well-articulated and enforced attendance policy.

- ***While, on average, students participated in the school-based, after-school programs for 20 days in a typical semester, they also tended to participate over an extended period of time, not just a single semester.*** The ESS after-school programs generally operated for 11 weeks each semester, and registered students attended slightly less than two days each week, on average. While this relatively small number of days could suggest that participants may not be attending often enough for programs to achieve their goals of strengthening youth's academic and social skills, it is important to understand that participants also attend these programs over an extended period of time. In the ESS sites, for example, more than a third (35%) of the enrollees participated all four semesters that were covered by this study and, overall, 84 percent participated in two or more semesters. These participation patterns suggest the possibility of a cumulative effect of less intensive participation over time. In addition, for many youth, ESS was only one aspect of their after-school participation in organized activities, and those other activities also have the potential of providing supports and opportunities for positive development.

The following chapter explores the quality of the activities that youth experienced as they participated in the ESS programs.

IV. The Quality of Activities Offered in the Programs

The children and youth who came to the after-school programs participated in a range of activities that included remedial academics, academic and cultural enrichment, sports and recreation, and community service. (The sidebar on the next page describes the percentage of time devoted to each type of activity across all of the ESS sites.)

But what was the quality of these activities? Among the goals of ESS was to foster positive youth development by engaging participants in quality after-school programs that provide the supports and opportunities deemed essential for helping young people develop new skills and interests, build positive relationships with adults and peers, and become involved in leadership and decision-making roles.

Every activity has the potential to foster positive youth development. While individual activities may place differing emphases on how they go about providing specific supports and opportunities for youth, practices that promote positive development should be present in some degree across each activity, whatever the goal or content—whether it focuses on tutoring or other remedial academics; academic or cultural enrichment; community service; or sports and recreation. "Youth development" is not a type of activity but rather a set of practices that should be present in any activity.

This chapter examines the quality of the activities provided in the after-school programs. It addresses the following questions:

- What characteristics of activities are most likely to contribute to positive youth development?
- To what extent did the activities in ESS provide youth with these developmental supports and opportunities?
- What are the implications of these findings for policy and practice?

To illustrate some of the features of high-quality activities, the chapter also describes three specific activities in more detail.

Information for this chapter is drawn from observations made during the 2000-2001 academic year of 30 activities—including academic, enrichment and service activities—in three after-school programs for middle school students.[21]

Types of Activities in the After-School Programs

Across the ESS sites, students participated in a range of activities. This list shows the percentage of total hours of programming that sites, as a whole, devoted to each type of activity:

Academics	26%
Enrichment*	21%
Sports/recreation	21%
Free-time	11%
Community service	9%
Leadership	9%
Career preparation	3%

* Includes cultural and some academic enrichment activities, and visual and performing arts activities.

Source: Survey completed by 54 ESS programs in Spring 2001.

What Dimensions of Activities Contribute to Positive Youth Development?

Several basic conditions seem necessary if an activity is going to be a positive experience for youth. Staff need to present the activity's goals and directions in a way that youth can grasp, and have a firm but positive management style that neither stifles youth with too much control nor allows the room to become so chaotic that participants have difficulty doing their work. An appropriate staff-youth ratio also contributes to an activity's success, as does having adequate space so that youth can work comfortably.

Beyond these common-sense requirements, youth development theory and practice have identified four key features—or dimensions—of activities that are important for providing the supports and opportunities that contribute to positive growth and change in the young people who participate.[22] They include:

1. **Adult-youth relationships.** A positive relationship between the activity leader and participants helps youth benefit from the activity. It contributes to a sense of belonging; makes them feel successful; and shows that the adult is a dependable source of social and emotional support in and outside of the activity.

2. **Peer support.** Activities can provide youth with support from their peers, both by contributing to the development of social skills and by providing youth with opportunities to interact with one another in a positive way. Peer support plays a powerful role in youth development.

3. **Decision-making and leadership opportunities for youth.** Youth feel their ideas are valued and respected, and that they are making an important contribution when they have opportunities to make decisions about, and help organize or run, the activities in which they participate.

4. **Youth engagement.** If an activity is going to benefit youth, they should be challenged to learn and develop new skills. One indicator of the extent to which youth find activities interesting and challenging is their degree of enthusiasm and engagement during the activity. While being engaged in an activity does not automatically mean that youth are benefiting from it, they will not profit from an activity if they are not engaged—if they are bored, easily distracted or uninterested in completing the task.

It is important to note that most activities are not designed to be equally strong in all four of these key developmental features. Some activities that are weaker in one area may be very strong in others. For example, a tutorial activity will be less likely to include much peer support but may be strong in adult support because of the intense one-on-one attention that staff give individual youth. Similarly, an activity that is structured around teams of youth working together to develop and complete projects may be stronger in providing opportunities for peer support and decision making than in adult-youth relationships.

Programs that offer a range of activities can create a balance across their offerings so youth ultimately experience all of the key features that contribute to positive development.

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What Was the Quality of the ESS Activities?

The ESS activities were, on the whole, well designed and well implemented. Among the 30 that we observed, all but two provided at least some developmental supports and opportunities for youth.[25] This section describes the extent to which the four key dimensions were present in the ESS activities and provides more detailed discussions of three of those activities. (Table 4 illustrates the average score on each dimension in five types of activities.)

Most activities were characterized by positive adult-youth relationships.

In general, adults leading the activities provided youth with both instrumental and emotional support. In fact, providing instrumental support—guidance to help youth understand and succeed at the task at hand—was what adults leading the activities were best at. (Two-thirds of the activities were rated very positively in this area.)

The emotional support that youth received from adults was manifested in the interactions between staff and participants, which were, for the most part, warm, friendly and relaxed. This warmth was more apparent in enrichment and creative arts activities than in academic activities in which the adult-youth relationships were, in general, more formal or business-like, focused on the task at hand, and characterized by fewer personal exchanges and little of the friendly joking and teasing that were apparent in adult-youth exchanges in other types of activities.

However, while youth were not receiving high levels of emotional support from adults during tutoring and homework help, they were getting high levels of support that helped them understand and succeed in their work. One youth described the value of this kind of support:

> *Like, if you don't understand something, she keeps repeating it so you understand it, till you get it. Like, if I was having a problem with...using the angle ruler or something, she would show me again and teach me how to use it again.*

Observing Activity Quality

How is it possible to identify the extent to which key features are present in activities? Observers can look for answers to questions such as these:

Adult-youth relationships:
- Does the adult help youth understand and succeed at the task at hand?
- Does the adult respond to youth as individuals whose ideas merit interest, encouragement, respect and praise?
- Do the adult and youth interact in a friendly and comfortable way?

Peer support:
- Do the activities encourage cooperative interaction by, for example, having youth work in groups, or do collaborative problem solving?
- Do the youth seem supportive of, and comfortable with, each other?

Decision-making and leadership opportunities:
- To what extent do youth have input into planning an activity and deciding how to carry it out?
- To what extent are there opportunities for youth to take formal (assigned) or informal leadership roles by, for example, assisting with tasks, helping other youth, or serving as team captains or group leaders?

Youth engagement:
- To what extent are youth actively participating? Do they seem interested in completing the activity or are they just going through the motions? Are they focused or inattentive? Do they appear to be having fun?
- To what extent do youth show in their comments and/or behaviors that the task is at an appropriate level of difficulty? Do they appear to be frustrated because the activity is too hard, or bored because it is too easy?

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Table 4:
Average Scores on Quality Dimensions for Types of Activities
(scale of 1 to 5, with 5 as the highest)

	Community Service	Remedial Academics	Academic and Cultural Enrichment	Performing Arts	Visual Arts
Instrumental Support*	3.2	3.9	4.4	3.2	4.3
Comfortable Adult-youth relationships	3.3	3.2	4.3	3.6	4.1
Cooperative peer behavior	3.3	2.6	4.0	3.7	2.1
Comfortable Peer relationships	3.5	3.0	3.9	3.9	3.8
Decision-making	2.3	1.1	3.0	2.7	1.9
Leadership	3.3**	1.2	2.0	2.3	1.1
Youth engagement	3.2	3.4	4.1	4.1	4.1
Number of activities***	4	5	8	7	3

* "Instrumental support" refers to the extent to which the adult helped youth understand and succeed at tasks involved in the activity.
** One activity significantly raised the average "leadership" rating in this category.
*** The chart includes 27 of the 30 activities we observed. Three are excluded because they did not fit any of the categories of activities. They include a sports activity, a discussion group on various teen issues, and an activity that crossed multiple categories.

The academic activities were very task-oriented: their purpose was to complete homework and/or master a specific set of academic concepts or skills. Thus, whether or not they were taught by a teacher, they incorporated aspects of the classroom. More than half of the academic activities were led by teachers, which might seem to suggest that the activities were less warm and friendly because teachers maintained the formal and task-oriented teacher-student relationship that exists during the school day. However, teacher-led enrichment activities in other areas, such as creative arts, were just as warm and friendly as non-teacher led activities in those categories.

In general, the after-school activities provided youth with a supportive peer environment.

In more than half of the activities we observed, the quality of peer interactions was very positive. Youth seemed comfortable together, laughed and joked, and seemed to enjoy each other's company. Importantly, one of the things that seemed to affect the quality of peer interactions in an activity was the quality of the adult's relationships with the youth, suggesting that the adult sets the tone for peer relations. (See the boxed description of a chess club that illustrates this connection.)

But while the interactions among youth were, for the most part, quite positive, only a third of the activities provided opportunities for high levels of peer cooperation. Small group projects provided the most opportunities for youth collaboration and teamwork, while academic activities and visual art activities where youth worked on their individual projects provided few opportunities for this kind of cooperative interaction.

Activities provided far fewer opportunities for decision making and leadership.

Overall, only a few of the ESS activities provided opportunities for decision-making: six were rated 4 or better, while 15 received ratings of less than 2 in this area. Youth-driven and open-ended activities (the final product or goal was not predetermined by an adult) offered youth the most decision-making opportunities. These were generally cooperative group activities where youth worked together on projects.

However, some of the art activities, while carried out individually, were also open-ended and, thus, provided many decision-making opportunities for participants. For example, during one activity where youth were working in clay, the instructor asked them to pick a theme for their projects and explained that the individual clay pieces they made would be related to the theme and would be displayed at an art show at the end of the semester. After discussing various

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What Works?

Chess Club: Strong Adult-Youth Relationships Creating Positive Peer Dynamics

What it is: The chess club, an activity for sixth to eighth graders, is led by a teacher at the school. Sessions take place four days a week, are attended by about 20 youth (almost all of them male) and lasts for two and a half to three hours. As a member of a state chess league, the club also competes weekly with other middle and high school chess clubs.

Why it is being highlighted: This activity illustrates how the quality of the adult-youth relationship can set the tone for positive peer dynamics. It also exemplifies how an adult can heighten and sustain youth's interest in an activity and make the activity challenging. That, in turn, motivates and engages the youth.

How it works: The teacher wants to develop the students' chess skills and love of the game. He has a library of 60 chess books that the youth can borrow and he helps them select books appropriate to their level. He also bought a computer program to help the kids build their skills.

To develop their skills, the youth sit at a long table and play in pairs or against the teacher, who plays against several youth at a time on different chessboards while monitoring all the other games. He communicates an enthusiasm for the game and a belief that the players can become better with experience. When a youth wins a game, the teacher praises his great moves. He then challenges him to further develop by asking him to play with a more advanced player. The good players seem to take pride in being called on to help others learn the game. When a less experienced player loses a game, the teacher turns the youth's attention not to the loss but to his potential to win by pointing out that the winner had far more experience. "You are just starting out," he says, "and you almost won!"

Why it works: The teacher uses chess as a vehicle for developing character, perseverance and problem-solving skills that can be applied to situations beyond the chessboard. He:

- *Fosters the strategic problem-solving skills that chess requires* by giving constant encouragement and positive feedback, but rarely tells youth what moves to make. Instead, he encourages players to learn from their mistakes and the mistakes of their opponents. In fact, in the chess club, there are no "mistakes," only opportunities to learn. During one practice session, after a student lost a game, the teacher gathered the others around the chessboard to discuss the move that contributed to the loss and asked the group to think of a move that would be better—thus turning losing into a valuable lesson from which everyone could benefit. The weekly competitions with other schools are similarly used as learning experiences.

- *Creates a supportive environment.* Chess is a competitive game, but the teacher takes pains to instill a love of the game and a spirit of teamwork rather than a competitive ethos. He sets a positive example by being polite and respectful to the youth and, similarly, discourages them from making negative comments about each other. When, in one session, one youth criticized another's move, the teacher quickly responded, "We don't do that [criticize others]. Everyone makes moves like that." Youth pick up on this and treat each other with respect.

As a result of the teacher's skill in motivating the youth, his ability to help them develop their skills and the team spirit that fills the room, youth are highly engaged in this activity. They focus intensely on their own games and, when they are finished, watch their peers play. In fact, the youth are so engaged that sometimes the teacher has to escort them out of the door at 5 p.m. when the activity is scheduled to end, because otherwise they would stay even later.

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ideas, the group settled on an "Enchanted Forest" as the theme for their clay art. Each participant decided what figure, related to this theme, he or she would create from clay. After the instructor provided the group with some guidelines about working with clay, she encouraged additional problem solving and decision-making by asking them to think through the technical challenges presented by their individual pieces, such as how to get their figures to stand or how to prevent a figure's horns from breaking.

As with decision-making, only a few activities provided leadership opportunities for youth. These occurred in only seven of the activities; and when they did, in most instances, were informal and involved youth teaching or demonstrating a technique to their peers. Sometimes staff asked one youth to help another; more often, youth did this themselves without being asked. Activities that encouraged youth to collaborate provided informal leadership opportunities more often. Allowing youth to work together appears to encourage youth with "natural" leadership tendencies to spontaneously help or teach their peers. (See the boxed description of Lego Robotics for an example.)

One of the few activities that intentionally provided significant leadership opportunities was a service activity that took place in a k-8 school, where eighth graders were being trained to work as assistants or junior staff in the after-school programming for first to fifth graders. The eighth graders were given real responsibility for the younger children—for example, helping the children with tasks in their after-school activities and accompanying them from place to place within the school.

Perhaps not surprisingly, we found a negative relationship between the amount of instrumental support provided by the adult and leadership opportunities for youth, suggesting that leadership roles are more likely to emerge when the staff hold back a bit and/or call on youth to provide instructional assistance.

On the whole, youth participated actively in the sessions and appeared interested and engaged.

Overall, youth appeared to be highly engaged in the after-school activities. Of the 30 activities we observed, 27 received positive or very positive ratings in this area. During these activities, youth actively participated, seemed interested in completing the project or other work connected with the activity, and were focused and attentive most of the time.

Sessions in which youth were easily distracted or complained of being bored were rare, but were more often observed in the remedial academic and community service activities. For the remedial academic activities, the most obvious reason why youth appeared less engaged may be that in most cases, they chose activities of interest to them; but in the case of homework help and tutoring, they were less likely to choose out of interest and, in fact, may have been struggling with the subject matter being taught.

Among the different types of activities, it seemed most difficult for sites to design and implement service projects that were challenging and engaging. While we observed only four service activities, three of them were relatively unchallenging and did not seem to hold youth's interest. In one, for example, youth volunteered at an animal shelter, but because the rules of the shelter were so restrictive (for obvious safety reasons), they did little else than play with the animals and walk the dogs. In another service activity, youth visited residents in a home for the elderly, where they helped make greeting cards, passed out refreshments and led the residents to dinner. Neither of the projects seemed to take advantage of the learning possibilities that were inherent in the service activities; and youth were generally less engaged than they were during other types of activities, particularly the enrichment classes.

Specific practices seem to be associated with high levels of youth engagement. Youth are most engaged when they are participating in activities where the social environment of the room is positive (when adult-youth and peer relationships are warm and friendly) and the adult actively tries to motivate and challenge youth. Adults who provided this motivation were able to explain the relevance and importance of the activity or the skills they were developing, challenge youth to push beyond their comfort level, encourage them to persevere and praise their accomplishments.

Interestingly, youth engagement was not correlated with youth decision-making, suggesting that the interpersonal and skill-building dimensions of an

What Works?

Lego Robotics: Youth Working Together to Solve Problems and Make Decisions

What it is: The aim of this activity is to use Legos, laptop computers and other electronic materials to construct robots and program the robots to perform various tasks. Participants, who are middle-school youth, work in teams of three or four to construct their robots. Activity leaders are teachers in the school.

Why it is being highlighted: Lego Robotics is a good example of a successful youth-driven, collaborative activity that provides opportunities for peer cooperation, decision-making and leadership. Among the activities observed, these were the aspects of positive youth development that were least often present. When they did appear, it was generally in project-based, group activities where the adult leaders gave youth flexibility in deciding what their finished product would be and how they would get there. Such activities are often difficult to implement—they require both creativity and highly developed group facilitation skills on the part of adults.

How it works: The activity encourages experimentation and creative problem solving. Staff provide general guidelines, but it is the youth who are responsible for making most of the decisions about their project. Each team has to implement its own design ideas—deciding what sort of robot to build and what tasks to try to program into the robot. Youth on each team also determine how to organize their work and divide responsibility for building and programming the robot.

At the beginning of each afternoon's session, staff set out the goal for the day, but then allow each team to decide on its own approach to the work. In one early session, for example, staff explained that the day's goal was to explore and play with the new materials (such as the Legos), and begin experimenting with robot construction. Some youth decided to look through catalogs for ideas they could later use in the semester; some began to put robot parts together; and others started to play with the different materials to determine their usefulness. This emphasis on experimentation allowed for a range of approaches and resulted in each team developing different, but equally effective, techniques.

Why it works: The open-ended, youth-driven, small-group structure of the activity fosters high levels of collaboration, creative problem solving and decision-making. Staff:

- *Act as a resource to the youth rather than direct their work or instruct them.* They provide assistance, overseeing each team's work and supplying help and information as needed. But they also step back to let the youth make substantive decisions.
- *Emphasize peer-based learning.* The team-based structure of the activity promotes cooperative work skills. But even when youth work separately to develop particular skills, their individual efforts bear on each other because each youth eventually brings this knowledge to his or her team. In addition, staff actively encourage youth to turn to their peers, rather than the adult, for help in solving technical questions or other problems. This emphasis on peer-based learning creates a supportive peer culture.
- *Promote formal and informal leadership opportunities.* The assignment of specific responsibilities within the teams allows youth to take turns being the expert on an issue that the whole group needs information about. In addition, one youth sometimes emerges as the team leader, making decisions and delegating responsibilities to other group members.

The youth-driven nature of the activity, coupled with its technical challenges, makes it highly motivating and engaging to participants—and an excellent vehicle for expanding their social and problem-solving skills. Youth focus on their work with little direction from staff. They appear motivated to complete their robots, and they seem to enjoy the challenge of being responsible for organizing their work.

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activity may be more important to middle-school-age youth than their degree of input into the activity. Thus, while they may be engaged in activities they help shape, they can also be engaged in activities in which they have had little say, providing that the activities take place in a motivating and supportive interpersonal environment.

Overall, the enrichment activities were fullest in developmental supports and opportunities.

As a whole, the enrichment activities provided youth with the richest environment for positive development. The average ratings for adult-youth relationships, cooperative peer interaction and decision-making were all higher for this type of activity. In addition, project-based activities like Lego Robotics fostered spontaneous informal leadership. A number of the activities, like Lego Robotics and Chess Club, also incorporated academic skills such as math and problem solving.

Creative arts activities scored as high on youth engagement as did the enrichment activities and were individually strong in their provision of developmental opportunities. Creative activities that appeared to be particularly effective included an acting class that provided the opportunity for youth to write their own improvisations and plays, and a drawing class where the instructor helped youth develop their drawing skills while relating the techniques they were learning to the work of famous artists.

Remedial academic activities generally offered fewer kinds of developmental supports and opportunities.

These activities (homework help and tutoring) provided fewer opportunities for peer interaction and decision-making than did other types of activities, and they also rated relatively low in youth engagement. But they achieved their purpose. Staff leading the activities seemed skilled at providing youth with the support they needed to complete tasks successfully. More important, youth who participated in these activities reported that the sessions really helped them catch up on their learning and complete their homework. Most of these youth were struggling in school, and the sessions provided a useful service. As one student said:

> *I think it's helpful, 'cause you can have teachers that like know what they're doing, that gave you the work, or you can ask students that understand the work that you have, that could help you easier than if you were at home.*

Another pointed out that the teacher always checked at the after-school session to be sure he had completed his homework "so you won't like get away and don't do it."

The smaller class size of the after-school sessions was also important to students. As a youth in a middle-school math club noted:

> *Like the different things you don't know about math, you learn it...I mean, 'cause it's too many people in one room [in the school-day math class], and [the teacher] can't pay attention to each one.*

(See the boxed description of this math club.)

Even for youth who are doing well in school, homework activities can be a useful experience. As one girl who is a successful student reported, she attended because she liked to get her homework out of the way and also because she was given the opportunity to help other youth, an experience she valued.

What are the Implications of these Findings for Policy and Practice?

As the discussion above suggests, there was some variation in the kinds of supports and opportunities provided to youth across the different categories of activities. At the same time, there was also variation in quality among activities within each category. These variations suggest some key lessons for policymakers and practitioners as they attempt to develop and implement high-quality, after-school programs:

- ***Any type of activity can be rich in developmental opportunities, depending on how it is delivered.*** It was not the topic or skill that was being addressed, but the abilities of the staff member leading the session that were the key to high-quality activities. While youth came to the activities with some initial interest in them, that interest was most likely to be heightened and sustained when specific practices were in place.

What Works?

Math Club: Youth Development Principles Enhancing Remedial Academic Activities

What it is: Taught by the school's sixth-grade math teacher, the after-school club helps students who are struggling in her class to master the math taught during the school day. The after-school sessions are offered three days a week. Class size is limited to 10 to 12 youth; and, to accommodate as many students as possible in this small group setting, students are allowed to attend only one session a week.

Why it is being highlighted: Among the academic activities in the after-school programs, the math club stands out because it demonstrates how positive youth development practices can be incorporated into a remedial academic activity.

How it works: The teacher's goals are to improve the youth's understanding of math and build their confidence in their math ability. Her approach to remediation goes beyond simply reviewing the week's work or providing extra practice. Instead of relying on pencil and paper math problems, she uses a variety of approaches—including math games, puzzles and other hands-on activities—to demonstrate and reinforce math concepts. This allows students to explore what they have been learning during the school day in more detail and apply the concepts in a variety of ways, leading to a deeper understanding. In addition, the variety of the activities helps keep the youth focused and engaged.

Why it works: Because it is taught by the youth's classroom teacher, the activity has a direct connection to the school day, and the youth can see its impact immediately. But the real key is the quality of the adult-youth interactions. The teacher communicates her warmth and concern for youth's academic success through ongoing encouragement and the praise she gives when they succeed, praise designed to change their negative views of their math ability. She:

- *Challenges and supports the youth.* She boosts their math self-confidence by structuring the tasks and instructional pace so youth are successful. As she moves them through each activity, she makes sure they can succeed at the tasks, then challenges them to try something a bit more difficult. During one session, for example, when she saw that the youth at one workstation were proceeding without difficulty, she encouraged them to try something more challenging at the computer on which they were working. When they succeeded, she said, "See how smart you are."

- *Is, in the words of one observer, "a master at giving clear explanations."* She takes care to make sure every student grasps the concepts she is covering. "Are you sure you understand?" she asks. "All of you?" And after presenting each afternoon's instructions, she walks around the classroom to check on individual students and help those who need it.

- *Takes advantage of the small size of the after-school group.* The math club provides opportunities for her to get to know her students better and to be particularly attentive to their individual learning styles. She is also able to have more personal exchanges than might be possible during the day. These exchanges can help her form a closer bond with the students, understand their needs and teach more effectively during the school day. In one case, for example, after praising a student for successfully completing his math work that afternoon, she asked him, "What can I do to help you during class? Are others distracting you?"

In her responsiveness to the youth, and her ability to challenge and support them and build their confidence in their math skills, the teacher of the math club blends important youth development principles and effective teaching-learning strategies into a successful remedial math activity.

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These included a positive social environment, where both adult-youth and peer relationships were warm, friendly and supportive, but challenged intellectual environment where the adult actively motivated youth, pushed them to achieve beyond their (the youth's) initial expectations, encouraged them to persevere and praised their accomplishments. It did not seem to matter whether the adult was a youth worker from a CBO or a teacher from the school. Teachers could be as warm and responsive to youth as were experienced staff from CBOs, and the latter were just as successful in instructing youth as were the teachers.

- ***Different kinds of activities provide opportunities for youth to develop in different areas.*** Academic activities like homework help and tutoring are a "given" in school-based, after-school programs and, when done well, they provide youth with strong adult support that is valuable even beyond the activities' immediate purpose of building academic skills. Among the ESS programs, however, the enrichment activities provided youth with the richest environment for positive development. In addition to fostering strong adult-youth relationships, they provided opportunities for cooperative peer interaction and collaborative learning and for youth to develop decision-making and leadership skills. A number of these activities also incorporated academic skills such as writing, math and problem solving.

The following chapter discusses the ways in which participation in the ESS after-school activities benefited youth.

V. Benefits to Participants

After-school programs attract youth by offering them fun and interesting activities. Once there, the relationships they form with program staff and their peers (along with their innate interest in the activities) keep them coming. Program staff can then create an environment that stretches youth—heightening or expanding their interest and helping them master new tasks or skills.[24] One writer theorizes that, through repeated opportunities to experience "the sparks of excitement and absorption" in everyday life, youth develop initiative—the ability to motivate themselves from within and direct effort toward a goal.[25]

Good after-school activities can offer these absorbing experiences that help youth develop initiative. In addition, learning new things or improving a skill can give youth a sense of achievement and competence that, in turn, improves their sense of self. Improving youth's willingness to be persistent in the after-school setting could theoretically also spill over to the academic environment—perhaps even if the after-school activities are not academically focused.

Beyond those potential benefits, after-school programs can fill important social deficits experienced by some youth. In these settings, youth receive positive adult and peer attention that can reduce their need to use negative behaviors in order get attention from parents, teachers and peers. The tone set by staff members can also teach youth to socialize in more appropriate or mature ways. In addition, prior research has shown that forming positive attachments to, and obtaining guidance from, responsible adults can reduce the tendency of some youth to engage in risk-taking behaviors.[26]

Because they are school-based, the ESS programs may have some additional, school-related outcomes. Participating in a fun program at school may lead youth to come to school more often, like school more and/or increase their sense of belonging in the school community. These positive school-related attitudes and behaviors are hypothesized to further increase the probability that youth's academic performance would be enhanced.

Because the ESS programs are relatively young, it is now possible only to get an early sense as to whether the services the programs provide to youth are likely to positively affect them. A rigorous investigation of their impacts using a comparison group will be

appropriate only after programs are more established and have had time to fine tune their operations. Thus, in this chapter we report on our initial indications.

The chapter addresses the following questions:

- To what extent did the after-school programs change the way youth used their after-school time?
- What were the potential behavioral, academic and personal benefits for youth?
- What were the benefits for the youth's parents?
- What are the implications of these findings for policy and practice?

We investigated the potential benefits using two different strategies. In surveys administered in Spring 2001, we asked youth about the ways they felt ESS had helped them, and we also asked parents about the ways they felt the programs had helped their children. In addition, for some outcomes, we examined ESS's possible effects by comparing changes in the attitudes and behaviors of youth who participated in the after-school program and those who did not participate. It is important to note that the relationships between participation in ESS and the degree of change in youth indicate only that there is an association between the two; they do not indicate cause and effect. (See Appendix B for a fuller discussion of the methodology.)

Did the Programs Change the Way Youth Used Their After-School Time?

One important question about after-school programs is whether they increase youth's productive use of their after-school hours. After all, when the ESS programs opened, youth and parents could have just substituted those programs for other activities, such as clubs and sports teams, in which the youth were already participating.

As discussed in the chapter on participation, ESS tended to attract youth who were already "doers." During the year before they enrolled in ESS, approximately 70 percent of them had gone to some organized after-school activities—18 percent went to something once a week; 24 percent, two or three times a week; and 28 percent, four or five times a week. However, almost 30 percent had participated in no organized activities during the previous year.

The youth who had previously been the most involved in organized activities—those who participated two to five days a week before enrolling in ESS—primarily substituted ESS for their other activities. However, for the 48 percent of ESS participants who had previously taken part in organized activities either one or no days a week, ESS represented a substantial increase in their productive use of time during the after-school hours. Youth who had previously participated in no organized activities were enrolled in ESS an average of 2.2 days a week; and youth with one day of previous activities were enrolled in ESS an average of 1.8 days a week. Both of those groups also reported attending more than a day a week of other after-school activities.

What Were the Apparent Benefits for Youth?

Students who participated in the school-based, after-school programs seemed to experience positive change in four key areas: staying out of trouble; improving their school attitudes and behavior; strengthening their social networks; and learning new skills, seeing new possibilities and improving their self-confidence.

Staying Out of Trouble

One particularly important outcome desired for after-school programs is that they decrease the risk-taking behavior of youth. By providing them with structured, supervised activities, the time they have to get into trouble is decreased. In addition, the social rules and tone implemented by staff can teach youth to deal more appropriately with negotiation, social conflict and anger.

When we asked parents and youth if ESS helped them stay out of trouble and more appropriately deal with conflict, both groups—but especially the parents—believed ESS was very useful in this regard (see Table 5).

In addition to asking parents and youth about these behavioral characteristics, we measured changes in the youth's behavior over time. In 1999-2000, when they first entered the ESS program, youth answered a detailed survey about their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. An average of 13 months later, in Spring

Table 5:
Youth and Parent Reports: Staying Out of Trouble

Youth Report:	
ESS...	
helps me stay out of trouble	65%
helps me learn how to say no to things that I know are wrong or that make me uncomfortable	62%
helps me deal calmly with people who are being mean or starting fights	48%
Parent Report:	
ESS...	
helps my child stay out of trouble	84%
helps my child settle arguments without fighting	72%

Table 6:
The Relationship Between ESS and Staying Out of Trouble*

	Days Per Week of ESS		
	0 days	2 days	Difference
Percent indicating they handle anger in socially appropriate manners	53	73	+20
Percent reporting they started drinking alcohol	16	9	-7

*Based on statistical analysis of the baseline and follow-up surveys.

2001, they were asked these same questions again. Changes in youth's responses from the initial to the follow-up survey suggest that youth who attended ESS were more likely to react in a more socially appropriate manner to social challenge and were less likely to have begun to drink alcohol.

This change is illustrated in Table 6, which considers two theoretical groups of youth. Youth in the two groups are similar, and their responses to questions about behaviors and attitudes on the initial, pre-ESS survey, in 1999-2000, were identical. One group then attended ESS two days a week, the approximate average number of days that youth participated across the 10 intensive research sites. The other group did not go to ESS.

On the second survey, administered 13 months later, 73 percent of the youth who went to ESS indicated that they handled their anger in socially appropriate ways, through their responses to questions about whether they hit or yelled when they were angry, tried to talk things out with the person with whom they were angry or talked to an adult about the problem. Among similar youth who did not go to ESS during the research period, 53 percent indicated they handled their anger in socially appropriate ways. In addition, 9 percent of these ESS participants reported they had started drinking alcohol over the research period, as opposed to 16 percent of similar youth who did not go to ESS.[27]

School Attitudes and Behaviors

Most program operators, teachers and funders believe that youth's participation in after-school activities, such as those offered by the ESS programs, can positively affect academic attitudes and efforts and, ultimately, performance. Despite these assumptions and hopes, however, the links between youth development activities and academic outcomes are not fully understood. Teachers, principals and program staff have repeatedly told us that an important benefit of after-school programming is that it makes the youth more ready to learn (to sit still, pay attention and try harder) when they are in school. Many also expect that the help youth get on homework will also lead to better performance in school.

Data are just emerging about how after-school programming affects academics. Most of the after-school programs that have been shown to have an impact on academics are those that mandate five-day-a-week attendance. And even then, grades have been slow to change. In one study, for example, the authors found that youth in after-school programs did begin to attend school more often but, at first, there was no impact on grades.[28]

Given that most of the ESS programs were new and the levels of participation were well below five days a week, it was not thought likely that we would observe changes in grades or test scores. However, to gauge whether ESS was starting to have positive academic

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Table 7:
Youth and Parent Reports: School Attitudes and Behaviors

Youth Report:	
ESS...	
helps me do better in school	65%
helps me like school more	50%
helps me learn that hard work pays off	71%
Parent Report:	
ESS...	
helps my child do better in school	79%
helps my child like school more	86%
helps my child try harder in school	82%
helps my child complete homework	71%

Table 8:
The Relationship Between ESS and School Attitudes and Behaviors*

	Days Per Week of ESS		
	0 days	2 days	Difference
Percent reporting they started skipping school	20	11	-9
Percent reporting they really paid attention in class	29	49	+20
Percent reporting they felt very proud to belong to their school	76	84	+8

* Based on statistical analysis of the baseline and follow-up surveys

effects, we asked parents and youth if they thought the program helped the youth do better in school. In addition, we measured some "leading indicators" of academic improvement (a sense of academic mastery and the level of school effort) to ensure that we did not miss an important change if one had occurred.

As Table 7 illustrates, approximately two-thirds of the youth believed the program helped them do better in school, and it was even more likely that the parents found the program helpful to their children in this way. However, only half of the youth reported that they liked school better because of the program. As one of the parents in our interview study suggested, the youth may like going to school because that allowed them to go to ESS after the traditional school day, but they did not necessary like the school day better. The youth did, however, feel that ESS helped them understand that hard work can pay off.

Interestingly, the parents' survey responses are consistent with the expected pathway of change that could ultimately lead to increased academic success. High percentages of parents felt that ESS helped their children like school more and try harder in school, factors that may lead to learning more and doing better.

When we examined how the youth's academic attitudes and behaviors changed over time, we found a consistent story. Youth who participated in ESS activities experienced a greater increase in their sense of belonging at school and paid more attention in class. Again, consider the two groups of similar youth. As Table 8 illustrates, among the youth who did not go to ESS during the 13 months between the initial and follow-up surveys, 20 out of 100 reported that they started skipping school, 29 said they really paid attention in class, and 76 said they were very proud to belong to their school. Among similar youth who went to ESS two days a week, only 11 out of 100 reported starting to skip school; 49 said they really paid attention in class; and 84 said they were very proud to belong to their school.

Social Benefits

With schools squeezing in as much learning as possible during the day, times that have traditionally been available to students for socializing, such as lunch and recess, have been shortened or eliminated, leaving youth with fewer opportunities to socially interact with one another. And yet, during the late elementary school and middle school years, learning to appropriately interact with peers is a pressing developmental task.

After-school activities offer youth time to be with a wide range of their peers. By providing them with opportunities for these social interactions, the programs offer youth a chance to improve their social competence and get to know, and get along with, a more diverse group of peers. For some youth who are socially isolated, perhaps because they are new to the school or because other factors have made it dif-

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Table 9:
Youth and Parent Reports: Social Benefits

Youth Report:	
ESS...	
helps me make friends	73%
helps me be less shy around kids	63%
helps me learn about other cultures	52%
Parent Report:	
ESS...	
helps my child make new friends	92%
helps my child get along better with other children	86%

ficult for them to regularly interact with peers, participation in the after-school programs may lead to their feeling less socially isolated.

Indeed, as Table 9 illustrates, a benefit of ESS that was commonly cited by both youth and parents is that the program helps the youth make friends and get along better with their peers. In addition, 61 percent of the participants said that being in ESS helped them feel "less shy around adults," suggesting that their experiences in the program are helping them more easily interact with adults.

Skills, Self-Confidence and Life's Possibilities

The final set of outcomes we examined included learning new skills, seeing new possibilities in life and gaining self-confidence. Both parents and youth frequently cited these benefits (see Table 10). In fact, more than 9 out of 10 parents felt their child learned new skills and expanded their interests. Both parents and youth overwhelming felt that ESS helped the youth feel better about himself or herself.

What Were the Benefits to Parents of their Children's Participation in ESS?

In addition to directly benefiting youth, we expected that participation in the after-school activities could positively influence the quality of the parent-child relationship through a number of routes. First, it has the potential of decreasing parental stress by providing after-school care—a benefit that would be of particular importance to the large majority of the parents who were employed (69% had full-time jobs and 12% held part-time jobs). The after-school activities could also eliminate a major source of parent-child tension by providing opportunities for students to complete their homework before going home after school and, in addition, could supply youth with support from other adults so they are less demanding of parental attention.

In addition, research on mentoring has found that close connections with non-parent adults can foster improvements in youth's ability to connect with others.[39] Through consistently warm and accepting interactions with program staff, youth can begin to recognize the potential that exists in close relationships and open themselves up more to the people around them, particularly their parents.

Responses on the parent survey administered in Spring 2001 suggest that the after-school programs were having some of these beneficial outcomes:

Table 10:
Youth and Parent Reports: Skills, Possibilities and Self-Confidence

Youth Report:	
I see that I have choices and possibilities in life that I didn't know I had	74%
The after-school program helps me do things I didn't think I could do	72%
It helps me feel good about myself	69%
Parent Report:	
The after-school program helps my child learn new skills or develop new interests	91%
The after-school program helps my child feel more self-confident	88%

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- 80 percent of parents said they were less worried about their child's safety after school.
- 57 percent said their child's participation helped them manage their own work schedule.
- 47 percent said it let them attend classes or job training more easily.
- 45 percent said it helped them get a better job or do better at their job.

In addition, 86 percent of parents said the program was helping them to more appreciate their child's talents, and 74 percent said the program helped their child get along with family members.

What are the Implications of these Findings for Policy and Practice?

In this chapter, we examined the relationship between participation in school-based, after-school programs and a range of academic, behavioral, social and attitudinal outcomes. Like other studies, we asked parents and youth what effects they believed accrued from participating in the ESS programs. To complement the opinion data we obtained from parents and youth, we also examined, for some outcomes, how youth's attitudes and behaviors changed from the time they first started their ESS participation (between Fall 1999 and December 2000, until Spring 2001). We developed a comparison between youth who went to ESS an average of twice a week and youth who did not attend the after-school program at all. Our findings suggest these lessons for policymakers and practitioners:

- ***Participation in school-based, after-school programs is associated with behavior that could help youth stay out of trouble.*** One key goal of after-school programs is to provide youth with productive ways to use their out-of-school time and, thus, reduce their opportunities for risk-taking behavior. Our findings are consistent with ESS having this effect. Youth who attended the after-school programs reported less often that they had started drinking alcohol, and more often indicated that they handled their anger in socially appropriate ways. In addition, in the survey of parents, more than 80 percent agreed that "helping my child stay out of trouble" was a major benefit of ESS.

- ***Participation in the after-school programs is associated with positive effects on school attitudes and behaviors, but it is too early to know whether it has an impact on students' grades and test scores.*** A second important goal of after-school programs is improved academic outcomes for youth. Because most of the ESS programs were new and students participated, on average, fewer than two days a week, we did not expect to find changes in grades and, thus, instead examined indicators of academic improvement, such as youth's sense of competence in school and their level of effort. We found that youth who attended ESS reported more often that they really paid attention in class and were very proud to belong to their school, and they less often reported that they had started skipping school during the period between the baseline and follow-up surveys. In addition, in their own survey responses, more than 80 percent of parents agreed that participation in ESS "helps my child try harder in school," and 70 percent of the youth similarly agreed that their participation in the after-school program "helps me learn that hard work pays off."

As earlier studies have also found,[30] participants and their parents reported other social, academic and personal benefits. Between 80 and 90 percent of parents agreed that the after-school programs helped their child make new friends, learn new skills and increase their self-confidence. Although youth cited fewer benefits than their parents, approximately 70 percent of them agreed that participation in ESS helped them make friends, see new life choices and feel better about themselves.

VI. The Cost and Funding of After-School Programs

In contemplating new after-school initiatives, policymakers naturally ask, "How much does it cost to run one of these programs?" This deceptively simple question can have many answers, depending on what is included or excluded when defining "cost."

This chapter attempts to provide full and useful answers to the question by costing out 10 after-school programs using the same criteria and including the same cost components, regardless of whether programs paid in cash or received contributions.[31] Because of this equal treatment, it is possible to estimate the average cost of an after-school program, examine the different cost components and look at the factors that drive the costs. The discussion focuses on programs that are running four or five days a week, and it does not include planning and start-up costs. In addition, it is important to note that the cost study did not examine the relationship between costs and benefits to youth who participated in ESS at these schools.

The chapter examines the following questions:

- What is the approximate cost of a typical after-school program? What is the approximate daily cost for each youth slot?
- What are the major cost components? Which of those costs will most likely be paid through the cash budget? Which could most likely be covered through redirected contributions from partner agencies?
- What factors drive costs?
- What are the major funding sources and what strategies are sites using to become sustainable?
- What are the implications of these findings for policy and practice?

Answers to these questions can provide a framework for policymakers and program planners as they assemble the building blocks to finance new after-school programs or re-evaluate the funding of existing ones. While the data are drawn from 10 ESS sites, the method of estimating costs should be applicable to most in-school, after-school programs. It can also be adapted for after-school programs in other settings, where some of the factors driving costs may vary.[32]

What Does It Cost to Run an After-School Program

Ten geographically dispersed after-school programs of different types cost an average of approximately $150,000 during the school year. The typical program provided youth services from September to June for five days a week during the two or three hours after the school day ended and served 63 youth per day.

As Table 11 illustrates, across the 10 sites, the total cost of an after-school program during the school year ranged from a low of $63,118 to a high of $265,742. The range in costs is not simply a reflection of the number of youth served. A useful budgeting tool in planning after-school programs is a unit cost measure. Ideally, after-school programs plan youth activities, snacks and transportation for the number of youth who actually attend rather than the number of youth who are scheduled to attend. Therefore, this study estimated the cost per day of one youth slot when the programs were fully operational.[33] Among the 10 programs, the average unit cost per day for a youth slot was $15. However, as we will later discuss, the unit cost varied from a low of $8 to a high of $36 across the 10 programs.[34]

The following section looks at the various components—the building blocks of after-school program budgets—that contribute to these costs.

Table 11:
Cost Profile of 10 After-School Programs

	Average	Range
Total cost	$149,620	$63,118-$265,742
Number of weeks	33	30-36
Number of days per week	4.7	3-5
Number of youth served daily	63	25-88
Total cost per day of one youth slot	$15	$8-$36

What Were the Largest Cost Components?

Figure 2 illustrates the average distribution of cost components across the 10 ESS programs. Although the programs adapted different models and served different age groups, some clear budgeting patterns emerged. Across the sites, the largest cost component was the administration of programs, which represented 54 percent of total costs. Although, at first glance, it might appear that the after-school programs were top heavy with administration, this is not necessarily the case. A later section examines what drove those costs, which include professional salaries and the time and expertise contributed by top-level administrators who helped build the programs' infrastructure.

As one might expect, the cost of providing youth activities—hiring adults to lead the after-school activities and providing the equipment and materials—is one of the most expensive items (on average, 35% of total cost). At the same time, the cost of the remaining services was a smaller part of total costs than program planners might have initially thought. The total cost of providing transportation, snacks and custodial help—all essential components of an after-school program—accounted for only about 11 percent of programs' expenses.

What Was the Division Between Cash Expenditures and Costs Covered By Partner Agencies?

After-school programs covered their expenses in two ways: through cash expenditures and redirected contributions, which include expenditures covered by partner organizations, the value of contributed time, and other services, such as bus transportation and custodial assistance.[35]

Across the 10 ESS programs, cash budgets covered, on average, about 60 percent of the total cost. School districts and other partner organizations covered the remaining costs with redirected contributions. On average, after-school programs' cash expenditures were about $89,000, or approximately $9 of the $15 cost per day per youth slot. The programs' additional $61,000 of expenses were covered by the redirected contributions, or approximately $6 of the cost per

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Figure 2:
Average Distribution of After-School Program Costs

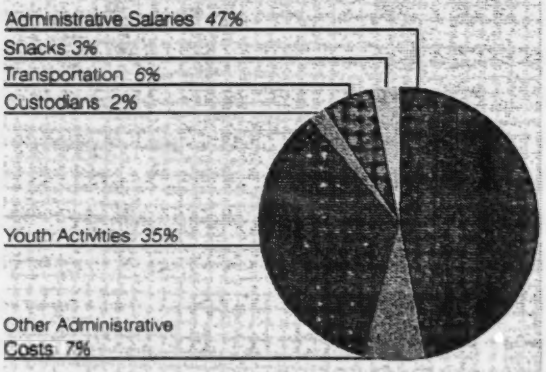
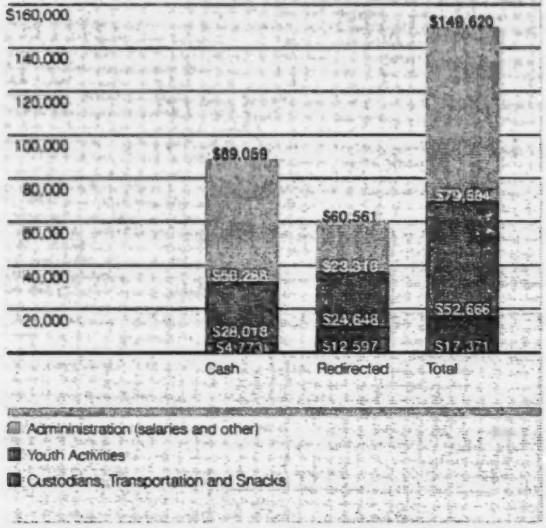


Figure 3:
Average Cash and Non-Cash Expenditures Across 10 After-School Programs



day per youth slot.[36] Thus, on average, 40 percent of the after-school programs' costs came from redirected contributions. However, it is important to note that the percentage of costs covered by these contributions ranged from 5 percent to 58 percent among the 10 programs.

Program costs can be organized into three major categories: administration; youth activities; and support services, including custodial help, transportation and snacks. In general, cash expenditures and redirected contributions covered different areas of costs. Cash expenditures went primarily for salaries for administrators and leaders of youth activities. The combined support services of custodial help, transportation and snacks accounted for only about 5 percent of the cash expenditures. Redirected contributions primarily covered the costs of additional administrative expertise, salaries of youth leaders, custodial help, transportation and snacks. Figure 3 illustrates the average cash and non-cash expenditure in each of these categories.

Administrative Costs

Almost all of the administrative cash cost was for salaries—programs spent an average of $48,000 on this item. As described in Chapter II, a typical after-school site had a program director and a site coordinator. In some cases, there was also one or more on-site support staff. Where the program director was a full-time job, the annual salary with fringe benefits ranged from $34,000 to $60,000. In those cases, the director administered from three to six after-school programs throughout the city. Where the position was a part-time job, the director usually worked 20 hours a week and was responsible for three or four programs. In some cities with only one or two after-school programs, an executive-level administrator from a college or a CBO filled the program director's role.

Site coordinator salaries ranged from $5,000 to $39,000, depending on the number of hours worked and the salary scale for that program. In addition, some programs hired support staff, although their salaries were a small component of administrative costs. Among the 10 programs, support staff ranged from a full-time program staff person to minimum-wage, part-time assistants to stipended high school-age youth workers (often high school students who

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had previously attended the program), to no support staff at all.

In addition to the costs of paying salaries, the programs needed another $8,000 to cover other cash expenditures, such as office expenses, staff training and public relations.

The redirected contributions that covered administrative costs took the form of contributions of administrative time and expertise. After-school programs received assistance from administrators in their sponsoring community organization, partner community organizations, the school districts and colleges.

The cost of these contributed hours was a significant portion of the overall administrative cost, and its importance could extend beyond administrative services, such as handling the payroll and doing the financial reporting. For example, although program directors spent some of their time nurturing partnerships and doing fundraising, another method of developing funding was to obtain the services of a grant writer, and this was usually a contributed service. Although fundraising increased the cost of programs in the short term, the programs often succeeded in expanding their funding base and securing the sustainability of their activities for the next several years.

Youth Activities

The major cost associated with the youth activities was the salaries of the activity providers, who included teachers from the schools, staff from CBOs and other adults. The programs spent an average of $28,000 in cash expenditures on youth activities, almost all of which went to pay hourly wages to the activity leaders. Most of the redirected contributions in this area similarly went to cover the salaries of activity providers who were on the staff of partner agencies.

Support Services

Although bus transportation, snacks and custodial help—all essential components of after-school programs—can be expensive items, the majority of sites obtained these services by developing strong partnerships with their host schools and school districts. School districts covered most or all of the cost of snacks, buses for transportation home and additional custodial hours beyond the usual school requirements.

Table 12:
Range of Component Costs Across 10 After-School Programs

	Low	Average	High
Program Administration	$36,000	$80,000	$145,000
Youth Activities	$22,000	$53,000	$98,000
Transportation	$0	$9,000	$34,000
Snacks	$1,000	$5,000	$11,000
Custodians	$0	$3,000	$11,000

On average, after-school programs spent approximately $5,000 in cash expenditures on all three items. Eight of the 10 programs incurred no cash expenditures for custodial help, and half of the programs were able to obtain snacks through the Department of Agriculture's nutrition program at their schools. Most school districts rearranged bus schedules to accommodate the after-school programs, so programs often paid only for bus transportation for field trips.

What Makes Some Programs Cost More (or Less) Than Others?

The total cost of the 10 after-school programs ranged from approximately $63,000 to $266,000. As Table 12 illustrates, there was a similarly large range across each of the component parts of the programs' budgets. And while the average number of youth served daily varied widely among the programs—from 25 to 88—the range in costs was not simply a function of numbers of youth served. In fact, the daily cost per youth slot ranged from $8 to $36, with an average of $15.

The cost of individual after-school programs depended on a number of factors: program's choices and opportunities; basic requirements of their community setting (for example, the need for transportation); and their relative ability to plan accurately for the actual number of youth who would be participating. In addition, some programs had higher costs because they were very successful in forming partnerships and, thus, were able to leverage additional resources for youth activities or for fundraising and other efforts to develop and sustain

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their programs. Their higher costs, in other words, were a function of having greater resources that allowed them to do more.

Choices and Opportunities

Programs costs are affected by the choices made about administrative structure, the types of activities provided and the staff-to-youth ratio, as well as the degree of focus on factors such as fundraising and the future sustainability of the program. Looking across programs at the high or low level of expenditures for these components, one can ask, "What did the program gain?" or "What did the program do without?"

1. **Administrative structure**. The largest cost component of all 10 after-school programs was administration, and the two key staff positions whose salaries are included in this cost are the program director and the site coordinator. While those positions were almost always covered through cash expenditures, many of the programs were also able to leverage additional administrative expertise from partner agencies that contributed staff time.

   What appears to matter most in administrative costs is that sufficient resources are expended on the internal management of the after-school program, and on developing and maintaining external partnerships and working to create a solid base of funding. Ideally, the site coordinator was a full-time position and the program director was budgeted for a sufficient number of hours to fulfill the essential role of developing partnerships, raising funds and performing the numerous other tasks that are necessary for sustaining programs.

   When either the program director's or site coordinator's role was allocated too few hours in the budget or left unfilled for months at a time, the after-school programs suffered. Problems that surfaced included a drop in youth attendance and a lack of system building for future sustainability. In addition, while the time contributed by partner agencies increased total program costs, it also had the positive effect of building the infrastructure of the after-school programs.[37]

2. **Activity leaders' salaries.** A key factor in the cost of activity leaders was the extent to which the school's regular teachers were involved in the after-school program and how their salaries were covered. Some of the after-school programs hired non-teacher activity leaders who could work at a pay scale that was lower than teachers' union-mandated hourly salaries. In some cases, however, programs specifically sought the expertise of certified teachers (a programmatic choice) even if it meant paying higher salaries. In other instances, the teachers' higher hourly salaries were easily covered because redirected funds for this purpose were available through the school district (an opportunity). Finally, in some school districts, teachers were paid lower hourly salaries for work in the after-school programs than they received during the regular school day.

   In addition, decisions to hire other staff for the after-school programs, beyond the regular activity leaders, also increased costs. One program, for example, had a physical education teacher as a part-time member of the after-school staff. Another program had the part-time, contributed services of a police officer from a community relations department.

3. **Serving more youth for fewer days.** To meet the needs of their particular communities, planners at some of the sites chose to have their after-school programs serve a large number of youth less intensively—each youth attended for fewer days per week. Sites that made this decision incurred higher administrative costs because they had to handle the transportation and other logistics of having a different group of youth scheduled for each day.

4. **Breadth and types of youth activities.** Some programs offered activities, particularly performance and visual arts activities, that were more costly to run but enriched the program. Typically, they were able to do this because of their success in forming partnerships and leveraging resources. One site, for example, offered an art activity—funded through redirected contributions from a partner organization—that was led by working artists who were paid a relatively high hourly rate.

5. **Staff-to-youth ratio.** Some after-school programs had higher costs because of decisions to provide mentoring or one-on-one tutoring, or to simply have more staff available to interact with youth. In some cases, programs hired high school youth or college students to supplement their staff. One program benefited from the contributed services (calculated as part of the total cost) of graduate students on assistantships who mentored and tutored individual youth. When programs hired high school youth, the added expense was minimal because they received minimum wage salaries or stipends. Those youth, who had formerly attended the after-school program as middle-school students, could serve as role models for participants, as well as improving the staff-to-participant ratio. In addition, working in the after-school programs provided them with opportunities for leadership development.

Required Support Services

Program costs also were influenced by community context, such as whether youth could walk home or required busing. Some of the programs incurred costs for transporting almost all youth home on a daily basis, while others that served a local neighborhood had none of these costs at all. Most school districts covered all or part of the cost of daily busing (a redirected contribution); the programs paid for transportation for field trips from their cash budget.

Across the programs, there was a range of costs for other required services, including snacks and custodial help. Costs of participants' snacks varied, depending on whether the after-school programs obtained them through the schools' free and reduced-price lunch program. The actual cost was higher per snack when the food came as a redirected contribution through this program, but the sites did not have to rely on scarce cash resources to cover the costs. There was also a range of costs for custodial help. One school, for example, promoted one of its custodians (at a cost of approximately $7,500 annually) so he could be assigned to a later, one-person shift to cover the after-school program's needs. In another school, custodians already worked the late shift, so no cost was incurred when the school rearranged cleaning assignments to accommodate the after-school program.

Accurate Planning

Finally, the after-school programs' ability to plan effectively for the actual number of youth who participated each day had an effect on costs. Programs cost more if resources were under-utilized. Sites that planned activities, hired teachers and arranged transportation, not for the number of registered youth, but for the number of youth expected to attend, avoided paying for resources that ended up not being used. As they became more familiar with participation patterns, some of the programs solved the problem of under-utilization of resources by allowing over-enrollment for activities—they knew that only a percentage of the youth would attend. Other programs began to keep waiting lists and replaced dropouts from an activity with newly registered youth.

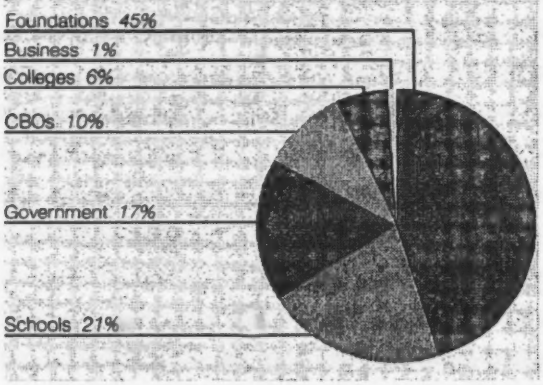
How Were the Programs Funded?

The ESS after-school programs received most of their resources from foundations, school districts, government agencies and CBOs. Figure 4 shows, on average, how the 10 intensive study programs were funded for the 1999-2000 school year. Almost half the funding, 45 percent, came from foundation grants, and more than 86 percent of that foundation money was from the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds.[38] Foundation funding was usually given in the form of cash grants and was primarily used to pay salaries.

School districts (and schools) contributed 21 percent of the funds, government agencies at federal, state and local levels gave 17 percent and CBOs provided 10 percent. While most of the support from CBOs came from program's sponsoring organizations, several sites obtained significant additional resources from local, non-sponsoring CBOs. By design, youth attended the program at no cost to their families, so sites received no income from participant fees.[39]

The sidebar provides an overview of both the revenue and expenses of the average after-school program discussed in this chapter.

Figure 4:
Average Funding Sources
(including cash and redirected contributions)



What Strategies Are Sites Using to Sustain Their Programs?[40]

The ESS sites have, in general, developed strong relationships with school districts, and many of them have expanded their funding base to include government funds such as 21st Century Community Learning Center grants and state funding. However, they still face the task of sustaining their programs beyond their grants from the Wallace-Readers' Digest Funds, which were intended to get the sites up and running but not to sustain them over the long-run.

Recognizing that replacing those initial funds was going to be challenging, sites began their efforts to do so as early as their second year of operations.

As with most programs, their primary strategy focused on writing proposals for available state, foundation and federal funds. However, while they have generally been successful in this strategy, they also hope to lessen their dependence on grants, which are time-limited and often provide only relatively small amounts of funds. They, thus, have broadened their fundraising strategies in several ways.

Average Revenue and Expenses of an After-School Program School Year 1999-2000

	Funds
Revenue	
Cash Grants	
Foundations	$66,073
CBOs	5,286
School districts	10,440
Government (all levels)	5,458
Businesses	1,803
Subtotal: cash revenue	$89,059
Redirected Contributions	
CBOs	$ 9,207
School districts	21,268
Colleges	9,470
Government (all levels)	20,427
Businesses	190
Subtotal: redirected contributions	*$60,561*
Total Revenue	$149,620
Expenses	
Program Administration	
Salaries	$69,694
Office expenses	3,427
Outreach/training/conferences/travel	6,462
Subtotal: program administration	$79,584
Youth Services	
Youth activities (salaries, supplies, etc.)	$52,666
Custodians	3,455
Transportation	9,267
Snacks	4,649
Subtotal: youth services	*$70,036*
Total Expenditures	**$149,620**
Fund balance, end of school year	**$0**

Source: Cost data for 10 ESS after-school programs in the 1999-2000 school year.

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Expanding to Additional Schools

On the face of it, expanding a program would seem to be a paradoxical way to raise funds; but in three of the cities where the intensive research sites are located, planners considered starting after-school programs in additional schools as a way of strengthening their fundraising potential. ESS leaders saw this move as politically smart—as a way to increase visibility and attract funders who were interested in having broader coverage across a city. In addition, they perceived this approach as a way to coordinate efforts among after-school providers instead of having competition among them. To date, however, their efforts are in the early stages and only one of the cities has received funding for expansion.

Raising Renewable Public Funds

One approach for sustaining after-school programs is to raise dedicated, renewable public funds from a state, county or city. One site has successfully accessed federal Child Care and Development Funds for low-income children whose parents use the program as child care and who meet the income eligibility requirements. In two other ESS cities, initiative leaders have taken part in broad collaborative efforts to get legislation written to provide more funds in state budgets for youth development and after-school programs. However, while efforts to pass legislation to support after-school programs may provide significant resources in the future, the cities have not yet met with success. Going to the state legislature to get public funds is a long-term strategy, and one that involves a considerable investment of time and resources.

Building on Local Partnerships

The design of ESS called for CBOs to play a leading role, and it was hoped that this role would include involvement in developing a funding base that could sustain the programs over time. To this end, the sites are drawing on their partnerships in a number of different ways. Four of the 10 intensive research sites (located in two cities) are built on the Bridges to Success model, in which local United Ways are key partners. In those cases, the United Ways have provided funds for the initiative, and this relationship holds potential for continuing in the long term.

Other sites have, for the most part, also developed strong partnerships that could contribute to long-term sustainability. In one case, for example, a partnering organization (the Boys & Girls Clubs) joined with ESS because it was an opportunity to expand its programming into schools, thus helping the organization fulfill its mission of serving youth in a variety of settings; and this partner has expressed its willingness to shoulder additional costs, if necessary, to keep its current ESS program operating.

In two other ESS cities where the intensive research sites are located, the school district has been a particularly strong partner and led the way for sites to access to federal and state funds. Another site, located in a small city, has benefited from a pre-existing and very successful collaborative of local nonprofit organizations, state and county social service agencies, the health department, the school district and the mayor's office. Formed in the early 1990s with the common goal of providing services to the city's youth, the collaborative had a history of planning initiatives and raising funds that made it an ideal partnering group for ESS planners. The collaborative was instrumental in helping to initially get ESS funded in the city, and it has been an ongoing source of support. It is through this collaborative that ESS has access to a grant writer, a county employee who identifies potential sources of funds and writes many of the proposals.

What are the Implications of these Findings for Policy and Practice?

This chapter has "broken down" the cost components of after-school programs to help policymakers and practitioners "build up" new programs based on local choices and needs. Our findings suggest these key "lessons":

- ***After-school program costs are reasonable but vary considerably, depending as much on program choices, opportunities and local conditions as on the number of children served.*** In examining the costs of 10 ESS sites, we found that an after-school program can be run for an average of approximately $150,000 per school year, serving 63 youth each day for five days a week. This translates into a unit cost (cost per day per youth slot) of about $15. Among the 10 programs,

however, the cost ranged from $8 to $36 per youth slot per day. The unit cost depended as much on the after-school programs' choices and their initiative in leveraging additional redirected contributions, as on the number of youth who actually participated each day.

- ***Schools and school districts are essential sources of support.*** They made important cash and redirected contributions to the programs. In the 10 ESS sites studied, these partners contributed, on average, more than 20 percent of the cost of the program, including some or all of the cost of transportation, snacks and custodial assistance. This contribution was in addition to the rent-free use of the school building.

- ***About 60 percent of the ESS programs' budget needs were funded by cash grants.*** Raising these funds to sustain the programs over time is a challenging undertaking. The cash budget is the core of the program—it pays the salaried staff that administer the program and leverage the redirected contributions. For the ESS sites, a large percentage of their cash budget came through support from the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds. Sustaining the programs over time, after initial funding ends, is likely to be an ongoing challenge. Strong leadership—whether it comes from a CBO, the school district or another partnering organization—will be a key to success. Thus far, several strategies have seemed promising: starting out the initiative in the Bridges to Success model, with its United Way funding; having strong lead agencies for whom the ESS initiative fits a need; and developing strong partnerships with other providers and funders. Some sites have collaborated with other youth-serving initiatives to work toward the ultimate goal of dedicated state funding, but this is a long-term strategy. More immediately, they are likely to have to heavily rely on local resources for youth programs, and the availability of those resources varies across cities.

- ***While much of the focus on planning and sustaining programs tends to be on raising cash funding, the non-cash portion of the budget cannot be taken for granted.*** Across the 10 ESS sites, 40 percent of the budget, on average, was obtained through contributions from partner organizations. However, as after-school programs grow to scale, this form of support is likely to become more tenuous. For example, while school district contributions to the after-school programs grew over the course of the initiative, districts in several of the ESS cities are feeling the pressure of providing "free" services without additional income. (In fact, two districts experienced budget reductions during the cost study period.) Providing additional custodial hours for a limited number of after-school programs can sometimes be achieved with little or no added expense to the district. However, as the number of after-school programs increases, there will be a demand for added custodial staff. In addition, while the ESS programs were exempt, some school districts charge community programs for the use of the school building. And even where districts consider the schools a community resource already paid for by tax dollars, there may be a point at which school dollars can no longer cover the expanding costs connected with increased use of their buildings. At that point, the districts will have to charge for services or find new tax revenue.[41] Making after-school programs part of the official school district budgets, funded by taxes, has not yet happened.

  A similar dilemma exists for CBOs. Currently, many CBOs share their resources with fledgling after-school programs. These local CBOs generally have relatively stable funding and an administrative infrastructure that enable them to assist new programs with many redirected contributions, including administrative expertise in management and finances, and staff to lead after-school activities. However, CBOs' resources are limited. While the marginal cost of contributing to one after-school program may be small, contributing to many after-school programs in a city would require expanded resources for CBOs, including the hiring of additional staff.

After-school programs, while rapidly growing, currently provide services for only a small percent of eligible youth. The experience of the ESS sites suggests the challenges involved in finding sustainable sources of cash funding. As after-school programs multiply, the challenges are likely to increase for all

providers as more programs compete for limited resources. In addition, schools and CBOs may need to cut back on their contributions unless they receive additional funding.

VII. Conclusions

With the passage of the "No Child Left Behind Act" in January 2002, the issue of after-school programming will be on the minds and agendas of more people than ever before. This act converted the 21st Century Community Learning Centers from a federally to a state administered program. Every state is eligible to receive a portion of the billion dollars appropriated for the program, giving all the states a concrete funding opportunity to address the after-school needs of school-aged children. With this opportunity will come the need to make many decisions about the goals, design and content of the after-school programming, decisions that will influence which children and youth participate, what they experience and how they may benefit.

This report has aimed to put policymakers and program operators on firmer ground as they make these decisions by providing concrete information from existing school-based, after-school programs. While we by no means have all the answers, we hope policymakers and program operators will be able to make better-informed decisions so that children and youth are better served.

What have we learned?

1. School-based, after-school programs can be put in place fairly quickly and improve over time.

In our first report on ESS, we found that it typically took from six to nine for programs to find organizational partners and staff, assess community needs, pool additional community and financial resources, identify activity providers, and recruit participants.[12] The initial planning time was critical and, importantly, the ESS programs each received a grant of $25,000 to $50,000 as well as technical assistance, to help support this process. Over their first three years of operations, almost all of the programs developed strong relationships with their host schools, and they became better able to identify and address core goals. They also began to focus more on addressing program quality, rather than just program provision.

2. Demand for the programs is substantial.

Polls notoriously overestimate demand. But in the case of after-school programs, parents not only say they want them for their children, they enroll their children in large numbers. Among the 10 programs

we intensively studied, eight considered themselves to be operating at capacity—serving as many students as they could within their available resources—by their second year of operations. In fact, interest in the after-school programs was so high, relative to available resources, that three of those programs capped their enrollments, and one program, in its effort to meet the demand for registration, limited the number of days a week for which each youth could register. Across the eight sites that collected participation data on all youth who were enrolled in ESS (not just those enrollees who were registered for this participation study), slightly more than half of the schools' total populations were attending the after-school programs.

3. Locating the programs in schools serving low-income families is a very effective means of targeting services to low-income children and youth. However, special efforts are required if programs are going to be able to attract older youth and the most high-needs students in those schools.

The students served by ESS reflected the demographics of their schools. While, across the sites, participants were a diverse group of children and youth, they were overwhelmingly low-income, with almost three-quarters eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. However, while locating programs in schools where students have identifiable needs can go a long way toward effectively targeting services, it is more difficult to attract older youth to the after-school programs and to recruit the most high-needs children and youth—the students who have the most difficulty learning, are most disengaged from school and exhibit negative behaviors. In ESS, as has also been true in other after-school programs, younger children more frequently attended than middle-school students. In addition, despite efforts to develop recruitment strategies targeted to the most high-needs children and youth, the programs found it challenging to attract them to the after-school activities.

4. Choices about program requirements and content influence which children and youth enroll in the after-school activities and how often they attend.

Program characteristics affect participation patterns. At the ESS sites, planners had to make decisions about the goals and design of their programs that ultimately had an effect on which children and youth chose to participate and how often they attended. These decisions inevitably involved some trade-offs. For example, planners who decided that the program should serve, in part, as child care for parents were more likely to mandate, or at least allow, five-day-a-week enrollment. Planners who decided that tutoring would be a daily required activity for each participant might, through this decision, have discouraged youth from attending who felt the most frustrated with academics and wanted to avoid any additional classroom-like work.

One key decision was whether to require five-day-a-week registration or to allow more flexible scheduling. Five-day-a-week programs could fully serve parents' child care needs and increase the number of days any particular student attended and, thus, potentially have a larger effect on developmental and academic outcomes. However, programs that designed their activities in a more flexible manner (for example, art on Mondays, judo on Tuesdays, etc.) and permitted registration for fewer days per week touched the lives of a larger number of youth and may have attracted a wider range of youth.

Survey responses of ESS participants and their parents suggest that there are no easy answers for programs as they make their decisions. Substantial proportions of both the youth and parents said the youth did not attend ESS more often because they had other things to do elsewhere. Some of these youth and their parents did not want to commit to more intensive participation in a single program. At the same time, however, a significant number of parents said that restrictive enrollment policies—where their children were allowed to register for only a few days a week—limited the amount of time they might otherwise have participated in ESS.

5. The costs are reasonable.

The 10 geographically dispersed, after-school programs of different types we studied had an average unit cost of $15 per youth slot per day when all activities were in session. The typical program ran from September to June for five days a week during two or three hours after the school day ended, and served 63 youth per day. Excluding the cost of using the school space, programs ran for an average of approximately $150,000 for the year, with about 60 percent

of the cost being covered by cash grants and the other 40 percent through redirected contributions.

6. Cost varies considerably, depending as much on program choices, opportunities and local conditions as on the number of children served.

While the average unit cost of the 10 programs was $15 per youth per day, this unit cost ranged from $8 to $36 across the 10 programs. The cost of individual after-school programs depended on a number of factors: decisions about administrative structure, the types of activities provided and the staff-to-youth ratio; basic requirements of the community setting (for example, the need for transportation); and the extent of investment in such factors as fundraising and the future sustainability of the program. Looking across programs at a high or low level of expenditures in each of these areas, one should ask, "What does the program gain by higher expenditures?" and "What does the program do without by holding expenditures at the low end of the range?"

7. The current funding system provides few long-term and stable financial resources for after-school programs.

While policymakers acknowledge the need to subsidize after-school programs in poor communities (as evidenced by the 21st CCLC funds, some state and local funds, and much philanthropic support), the current system still requires programs to live year to year, scrambling for funds. The most frequent responses to this situation among the ESS sites were to under-staff the programs and divert staff time to fundraising. While under-staffing was the most common response, it was also the least effective way to meet budget constraints. Staff quality is the key to delivering high-quality programming. When there were not enough staff to do the job, work went undone—including program development, staff training and supervision. Additional funding to support more complete staffing is critical, but programs often found it difficult to undertake sustained fundraising efforts because that is full-time work, and they were already dealing with staff shortages. Sites that were able to explicitly focus resources on fundraising were more successful in expanding their funding base and securing their sustainability for several years. Those programs, however, cost more in the short term because of the expenses incurred in undertaking this kind of development work.

The experience of the ESS sites suggests the challenges involved in finding sustainable sources of adequate funding. As after-school programs multiply, the challenges are likely to increase for all providers as more programs compete for limited resources. In addition, programs may find it more difficult to generate non-cash support as schools and CBOs will be asked to provide growing amounts of redirected contributions—something they may not be able to do unless they receive additional funding.

8. After-school activities have the potential to provide a wide range of developmental supports and opportunities to children and youth. It is how staff deliver the activities, not the topic or skill being addressed, that determines the strength of those developmental opportunities.

Activities of all types—be they academic, enrichment, community service or sports—can provide children and youth with valuable developmental supports and opportunities. By participating in a range of challenging and interesting activities, young people have the chance to develop new skills and interests, build positive and supportive relationships with adults and peers, and develop a sense of mattering through making decisions and taking on leadership roles.

Staff practices and behaviors are the critical ingredient. Staff in high-quality activities set up physically and emotionally safe environments in which they heighten and sustain youth's interest, make the activity challenging, and promote learning and self-discovery. Academic activities like homework help are a "given" in school-based, after-school programs and, when done well, provide youth with strong adult support that has value beyond the immediate purpose of building academic skills. At the same time, however, other types of activities seem to more readily lend themselves to providing richer developmental opportunities to youth. These include well-implemented enrichment activities and open-ended, youth-driven projects in which participants work together in teams. Thus, programs should consider offering a range of activities for their after-school participants, rather than focusing narrowly on academics.

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9. Participation in the after-school programs was associated with improved school attitudes and behaviors and with a greater likelihood of staying out of trouble.

Two often-expressed goals of school-based, after-school programs are to reduce youth's risk-taking behavior and to improve their academic outcomes. When we examined outcomes related to risky behavior, we found that those who attend ESS programs reported less often that they had started drinking alcohol and indicated more often that they handled their anger in socially appropriate ways. However, we cannot definitively say that the programs caused these changes.

Because most of the ESS programs were new and students participated, on average, fewer than two days a week, we did not expect to find changes in grades and, thus, instead examined indicators of academic improvement, such as youth's sense of competence in school and their level of effort. We found that youth who attended ESS reported less often that they had started skipping school and reported more often that they really paid attention in class and were very proud to belong to their school. Again, while these changes were associated with participation in ESS, we do not know whether the programs caused them.

Some of the apparent benefits may reflect the fact that better-behaved and more academically inclined children and youth participate in school-based, after-school programs. However, participants and their parents both echoed the benefits. Approximately 70 percent of the participants cited making friends, seeing new life choices, feeling better about themselves and learning that hard work pays off as important benefits of attending the after-school programs. Parents even felt more positively about the benefits of their children' participation. Among the parents, 80 to 90 percent said that ESS was helping their child make new friends and get along better with their peers, stay out of trouble, like school more and try harder in school, learn new skills and become more self-confident.

In addition, parents felt that they also benefited. Almost half said that having their children in the ESS program helped them attend classes or job training more easily, or helped them get a better job or do better at their job. In addition, 80 percent of parents said they were less worried about their children's safety after school because of ESS.

However, after-school programs are not a panacea. Especially when considering older youth, who appear less likely to attend school-based, after-school programs, policymakers may need to shift their thinking from creating *the* program to expanding the set of options available in a community.

As children become older, they begin to search for a wider range of experiences. This expansion in their worlds is developmentally appropriate, but it means that the participation rates of older youth in any particular program—be it ESS or something else—will likely be relatively low. They are most likely to benefit if they, and their parents, are able to put together a mosaic of positive experiences—broadening the range of activities, widening their geographic horizons, and increasing their network of adults and peers. If there are several opportunities in their community that attract them, they can still be well served even though no one program seems to be engaging them intensively. As a recently released National Academy of Science report emphasizes, "The diversity of young people, their particular needs and their surrounding environments argue against the notion that a single [type of] program will fit all situations."[9]

Programs that promote development—academic, physical, emotional and social—happen now in many places, including schools, youth centers, churches and libraries. And many of the children and youth who participated in ESS attended other organized activities as well. In general, however, children and youth in low-income communities have limited access to high-quality, developmentally challenging activities, particularly in comparison to what is available in more affluent neighborhoods. In addition to having fewer resources, the young people in these communities are vulnerable to more problems associated with poverty and more risk factors, such as crime, drug use and diminishing opportunities for work.

Given the increasing challenges to children's lives and the increasingly more complex sets of skills and abilities that are required for success in the workplace of the twenty-first century, we may need to revisit how and where we make investments in our nation's children. This report has examined one type of investment—school-based, after-school programs

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run by CBOs in collaboration with schools. We found these programs, which are not strictly academic, appear to help participants work on many of the competencies they need for their future. When well planned and implemented, such programs can be a substantial option within a potentially larger network of diverse programming that provides a range of opportunities for all children and youth.

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2. See *Investing in Childcare.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Treasury. 1999; and Amie Jamieson, Andrea Curry, and Gladys Martinez. *School Enrollment in the United States—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students, October 1999.* Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census P20-533, 2001, p.3.

3. "Afterschool Alert, Poll Report: A Report on Findings of a Nationwide Poll of Registered Voters on Afterschool Programs." Afterschool Alliance, 2001. www.afterschoolalliance.org.

4. See Howard N. Snyder, and Melissa Sickmund. *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report.* Washington, D.C.: National Center for Juvenile Justice, 1999; D.L. Vandell, and J. Posner. "Conceptualization and Measurement of Children's After-School Environments," in S.L. Friedmand and T.D. Wachs (eds.). *Assessment of the Environment Across the Lifespan.* Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association Press, 1999; N.L. Marshall et al. "After-School Time and Children's Behavioral Adjustment." *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly,* Vol. 43:497-514, 1997; G.S. Pettit et. al. "Patterns of After-School Care in Middle Childhood: Risk Factors and Developmental Outcomes. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly,* Vol. 43: 515-38; and *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Nonschool Hours.* Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992.

5. The six cities and their 10 schools were chosen because they had the capacity to collect the necessary data. They include three elementary schools, four middle schools, and three mixed elementary and middle-school programs. Very few cities operated high school programs.

6. See Karen E. Walker et al. *Extended-Service Schools:Putting Programming in Place.* Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 2000; and Jean Baldwin Grossman, Karen E. Walker, and Rebecca Raley. *Challenges and Opportunities in After-School Programs:Lessons for Policymakers and Funders.* Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 2001. Both are available at www.ppv.org.

7. The chapter draws from information covered in the evaluation's two previous reports, as well interviews and organizational survey data from Spring 2001, the programs' third year of operations.

8. The founding organizations that provided technical assistance for each model were the Fund for the City of New York's Youth Development Institute (Beacon programs); United Way of America and the Institute for Educational Leadership (Bridges to Success programs); the Children's Aid Society in New York City and Fordham University's National Center for Communities and Schools (Community Schools programs); and the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Community Partnerships (WEPIC programs). In addition, technical assistance from the Finance Project helped ESS programs connect to a broader network of after-school resources and identify a wide array of potential funding sources. Finance Project staff also visited each program to help them develop and implement a plan for long-term sustainability.

9. The data are from 52 programs that responded to a survey in Spring 2001.

10. See Grossman et al., *Challenges and Opportunities in After-School Programs,* for a discussion of the transportation issues the programs faced during their early implementation period.

11. During summer, other vacation, in-school and during-school programs, activity emphasis is naturally somewhat different than in programming during the after-school hours. During summer sessions, for example, there is relatively less time spent on academic activities (although they are still an important offering) and relatively more time devoted to cultural enrichment and sports and recreation. Activities offered during the regular school day focus almost exclusively on academic help and sports and recreation.

12. A few of the ESS sites also provide additional services. Eleven programs offer health services to students, and in some cases, these services also extend to parents. Two programs offer legal aid services. In conceptualizing extended-service schools, funders and policymakers sometimes envision these supplemental services as being part of what school centers can offer. Because schools are widely recognized public facilities in the hearts of communities, they appear to be ideal places for services like social work referral and health clinics. However, these types of services require careful planning and constitute an added expense. Not surprisingly, then, only a few of the ESS programs have attained the capacity to include them.

13. For a full discussion of the planning process and who was involved, see Walker et al., *Extended-Service Schools: Putting Programming in Place.*

14. See Walker et al., *Extended-Service Schools: Putting Programming in Place,* and Grossman et al., *Challenges and Opportunities in After-School Programs.*

15. Discussions of participation include *Building Quality and Supporting Expansion of After-School Projects: Evaluation Results from the TASC After-School Program's Second Year.* Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2001; and *Evaluation of the MOST (Making the Most of Out-of-School Time) Initiative: Final Report.* Robert Halpern, Julie Spielberger and Sylvan Robb. Chapin Hall Center for Children, 2000.

16. These youth are a subset of the total number of youth enrolled in the ten programs. For youth to become part of the research study, their parents had to sign a permission slip and complete a form providing demographic information and the reasons why they chose to register their children in ESS. Parents of approximately 50 percent of the youth enrolled in ESS registered their children in the study.

17. One recent study that examines youth's ongoing participation in after-school programs suggests that effects take several semesters to materialize. See Denise Huang et al. *A Decade of Results: The Impact of the LA's BEST After-School Enrichment Program On Subsequent Student Achievement and Performance.* Los Angeles: UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, June 2000.

18. In its evaluation of programs operated by The After School Corporation (TASC), Policy Studies Associates, Inc. similarly found that the proportion of students attending at least three days a week was greater for programs serving elementary schools (81%) than for those serving middle schools (40%) or combined elementary-middle schools (74%). See *Building Quality and Supporting Expansion of After-School Projects.*

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19. In reporting why they enrolled their child in ESS, 83 percent of all parents surveyed said it was because the child wanted to get involved; 53 percent saw the program as offering their child opportunities for academic improvement; and 48 percent saw the program as a safe place for their child to be after school.

20. Another study points to some of the issues faced by planners as they decide whether their programs should have mandatory five-day-a-week or flexible enrollment policies. A study of the San Francisco Beacons Initiative in its formative years found that participation during a typical month varied, in part, by the degree to which attendance was mandatory. At three centers that included programs with mandatory attendance, one-fourth to one-third of the youth came 13 or more times during a typical month, or almost every day the program was open. At the other centers, attendance was lower. For example, at one of the centers with low attendance, roughly 79 percent of the youth came six or fewer times in the typical month—on average, once a week or less. See Karen E. Walker and Amy J.A. Arbreton. *Working Together to Build Beacon Centers in San Francisco: Evaluation Findings from 1998-2000.* Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 2001.

21. Each of the 30 activities was observed two or three times. Each time, the researcher observed the entire activity and used an observation instrument that required her to rate such features as the quality of adult-youth relationships, peer relationships, decision-making and leadership opportunities for youth, and youth engagement. Ratings were averaged over the two or three observations to come up with a mean score for each characteristic. Characteristics were rated on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest. Ratings of 2 or less meant not just the absence of a positive dimension but the presence of something negative.

22. See, for example, Michelle Alberti Gambone. *Launching a Resident-Driven Initiative: Community Change for Youth Development (CCYD) from Site-Selection to Early Implementation.* Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 1997; and Michelle Alberti Gambone and Amy J.A. Arbreton. *Safe Havens: The Contributions of Youth Organizations to Healthy Adolescent Development.* Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 1997.

23. In both of these poorly implemented activities, staff did not lead effectively. In one, a recreational dance activity, staff were present in the room, but did not instruct youth and barely interacted with them. While this did not interfere with the girls' enjoyment of the activity (they taught each other dance steps and appeared to be having fun), the adults did not take advantage of opportunities to provide youth with developmental supports and opportunities. The second activity was chaotic both times it was observed. Misbehaving youth completely disrupted the activity because staff were not effective in controlling the youth's behavior.

24. L.S. Vygotsky. *Mind in Society.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978.

25. W. Larson. "Toward A Psychology Of Positive Youth Development." *American Psychologist,* 55, 170-183, 2000.

26. See Joseph P. Tierney, Jean Baldwin Grossman, and Nancy L. Resch. *Making A Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters.* Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 1995; and J.E. Rhodes, J.B. Grossman, and N.L. Resch. "Agents of Change: Pathways Through Which Mentoring Relationships Influence Adolescents' Academic Adjustment." *Child Development,* 71, 1662-1671, 2000.

27. The numbers in Table 6, and later in Table 8, represent estimated outcomes for two groups of youth who are identical in their observable characteristics but differ in the amount of time they have participated in ESS. The predicted outcome levels are based on statistical analysis of the youth's characteristics, their experiences and their outcomes as reported in the baseline and follow-up surveys. We discuss only outcomes that differ statistically by ESS participation at a 90 percent level of confidence. See Appendix B for more details about the methodology.

28. See Huang, *A Decade of Results.* In addition, a study of older youth has found that participation in all forms of high school extracurricular activities (including sports, academic clubs, performing arts and school involvement activities) were associated with higher grade point averages in twelfth grade. See Jacquelynne Eccles and Bonnie Barber. "Student Council, Volunteering, Basketball, or Marching Band: What Kind of Extracurricular Involvement Matters?" *Journal of Adolescent Research,* Vol. 14, No. 1, 10-43, January 1999.

29. See Tierney et al., 1995; and Rhodes et al., 2000.

30. See Reisner, Elizabeth R. et al. *Building Quality and Supporting Expansion of After-School Projects.* Washington, D.C.: Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2001; and Warren, Constancia. *Evaluation of the New York City Beacons: Phase I Findings.* New York: Academy for Educational Development, 1999.

31. The 10 schools include three elementary schools, four middle schools, and three mixed elementary and middle-school programs. The cost figures for each program cover the 1999-2000 school year. Costs are for after-school programs only so that all 10 programs can be compared on the same basis. Thus, while some of the ESS sites provided school-day activities, evening programs for older teens or parents, separate weekend programs and summer programs, these costs are excluded. In general, most costs cover 10 months—for example, when salary costs are considered, only 10 months of a site coordinator's salary is included. In addition, the cost of using school buildings or other facilities is excluded. See Appendix C for more details about the methodology.

32. The most obvious example of the different factors driving costs for non-school-based, after-school programs is the probable lack of access to free use of school space for programming. Thus, rent might become a significant cost. But there are other, smaller factors as well, including, for example, providing snacks through a federally funded nutrition program that schools, but not CBOs, can access.

33. Sometimes, after-school programs did not run a full schedule of youth activities until the second or third week of the program's semester. Likewise, some activities were of shorter duration and ended before the after-school program semester ended. A "fully-operational program" refers to those weeks when all activities were in session.

    The youth slot cost is calculated for those weeks. A "slot" may be filled by the same youth each day or by different youth on different days. For example, one youth attends on Monday and Wednesday and another youth participates on Tuesday and Thursday; together, the two youth occupy one youth slot.

34. The unit cost is estimated, as follows: the cost of the program per week is calculated by dividing the average total program cost ($149,620) by the average number of weeks of programming (33

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weeks). The average cost per week across all 10 programs was $4,534. The average weekly cost is then divided by the average number of days per week that programs offer youth activities (4.7 days). The average daily program cost is then divided by 63, the average number of youth who attend the program each day (one proxy for this number is the number of snacks that a site serves each day), resulting in the cost per day per youth slot of $15.

35. This study does not include the value of volunteer time in the redirected contributions.

36. Two recent studies have also examined the cost per day per youth slot in after-school programs. A cost analysis of Los Angeles' LA's BEST after-school programs, which were also operated in school facilities, found an estimated *cash* cost of under $5 per day for one youth slot. Even with the addition of redirected contributions, the LA's BEST unit cost is far below the ESS unit cost. There are several possible explanations. The most plausible one is that the programs benefited from economies of scale—the LA's BEST system operates more than 80 after-school programs and enrolls approximately 15,000 youth during the after-school hours. This study was reported at www.lasbest.org.

    The study of the MOST (Making the Most of Out-of-School Time) initiative estimated an average weekly cost of about $80 per child per week for a five-day-a-week program, which is slightly more than the ESS unit cost of $15 per youth slot per day. Although the study relied exclusively on program-supplied budgets, which were not entirely comparable, many of the budgets counted expenses covered by redirected contributions. Unlike the ESS cost study, some of these budgets included rent for the use of facilities. See Halpern et al., *Evaluation of the MOST (Making the Most of Out-of-School Time) Initiative.*

37. In addition to these other factors, the four programs that operated under the Beacon's model tended to have higher administrative costs because they had an extra layer of administrative structure. While the other models have two administrative layers (the lead agency and ESS program staff), there are three layers in the Beacon's model. A local intermediary provides technical assistance and acts as the fiscal agent for all Beacons in a city. Then, there is an individual lead agency for each Beacon program. The third layer is Beacon program staff.

38. The Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds gave a substantial cash grant to each ESS site in the initiative with the condition that school districts provide space and that sponsoring organizations obtain some matching support.

39. One of the sites, in Boston, did charge families a fee for their children's participation because this was required by one of their funders.

40. Information in this section is based on interviews with key partners in the cities where the 10 intensive research programs are located and on responses to a survey sent to all of the ESS communities in Spring 2001.

41. Using tax revenues to help support after-school programs is not an entirely new idea. For example, in Minneapolis, the school district was able to contribute state-funded Area Learning Center dollars to pay teachers of youth activities in the ESS programs.

42. See Walker et al., *Extended-Service Schools: Putting Programming in Place.*

43. Eccles, Jacquelynne and Jennifer A. Gootman. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2001.

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Appendix A
The Extended-Service School Models

The Extended-Service Schools (ESS) Initiative was launched in 1997 by the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds to create 60 extended-service schools in 20 cities across the country. Each city adapted one of four nationally recognized models that had been successfully developed and implemented in other communities in the U.S. The models are:

1. The Beacon, a collaboration of a school and community-based organizations (CBOs).
2. Bridges to Success, a collaboration of a school, several CBOs and a local United Way.
3. Community Schools, a collaboration of a school, a CBO and a university.
4. West Philadelphia Improvement Corporation (WEPIC), a collaboration of a school and a university.

The Beacon

Originally implemented in New York City Public Schools, primarily in middle schools.

Mission: To develop and operate school-based community centers; to create "safe havens" for youth and families in poor neighborhoods; to promote youth development and resiliency.

Activities: A diverse array of youth development activities in five core areas: education, recreation and enrichment, career development, leadership development, and health. Activities take place during non-school hours and emphasize several factors important to youth resiliency: caring adult relationships, engaging activities, high expectations, youth's opportunity to make a contribution, and continuity.

Governance: Each Beacon Center has a lead agency that manages all activities at the school. A local organization provides technical assistance in organizational development as well as youth development practices. An oversight committee, consisting of school district staff and executive staff from key CBOs, provides general policy and management oversight. Each school has a school-level decision-making body that includes parents and other community representation.

Bridges to Success

Originally implemented in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Mission: To increase the educational success of students by better meeting the non-educational needs of children and their families through a partnership of education, human service and community service delivery systems, with a long-range vision of establishing schools as "lifelong learning centers" and focal points of their communities.

Activities: Vary according to site, but each site has an overarching goal of promoting positive youth development during non-school hours. Activities include educational enrichment, career development, arts and culture, life-skills, counseling, case management, health and mental health services, and recreation.

Governance: The Local United Way agency acts as the lead organization and fiscal agent. A local governance structure made up of United Way, school district, social service and community representatives develops citywide programming strategies and oversees implementation. School-level councils assess the needs and assets of the community, and design and implement program interventions. The councils include a program coordinator, school principal and other school staff, parents, students and local partners.

Community Schools

Originally implemented in elementary and middle schools in the Washington Heights section of New York City by the Children's Aid Society.

Mission: "Educational excellence, combined with needed human services, delivered through school, parent and community partnerships." "Seamless integration of school-day activities with extended-day programs."

Activities: A wide range of youth development programs during the school day and in non-school hours. Social services, such as on-site clinics, legal assistance and case management, are also provided. Parent education is an important component of the Community Schools.

Governance: Co-management of school facilities by the school and a CBO. Management staff from the CBO have space in the school administrative office so they can frequently interact with school principals.

Additional characteristics of the ESS national adaptation: Local universities play a key role in technical assistance and planning. An oversight committee, consisting of university staff, executive staff from key CBOs, and school district staff, provide general policy and management

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oversight. In addition, each school should have a school-level decision-making body that includes parents and other community representation.

West Philadelphia Improvement Corporation (WEPIC)

Originally implemented in Philadelphia.

Mission: A school-based school and community revitalization program to produce comprehensive, university-assisted community schools that serve, educate and activate all members of the community, revitalizing the curriculum through a community-oriented, real-world, problem-solving approach.

Activities: Academically based community service, such as graduate and undergraduate interns working in schools to provide educational assistance and mentoring to youth.

Governance: School principals and staff play key decision-making roles, such as deciding what substantive areas will be addressed through the initiative. Community councils provide guidance on program content.

Appendix B
Research Overview and Outcome Measures

This appendix first provides an overview of the evaluation and data collection for the ESS study, then describes in detail the outcome measures used and how we examined the relationship between change in outcomes and participation.

Evaluation Overview

In May 1998, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) and the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) began the evaluation of the Extended-Service Schools (ESS) Initiative, with the aim of providing practitioners, funders and policymakers with a rich set of lessons about how local school-based collaborations unfold and what they do. Our goals were to understand what it took to operate these ambitious programs; what practices contributed to high-quality, sustainable programming; who participated and how often; and what effects the program had on those participants.

The evaluation encompassed a multi-method approach designed to provide us with both an understanding of the breadth of programming experiences and the ability to more deeply delve into particular issues. To learn about the activities of the ESS programs in all 17 cities involved in the initiative, we asked the school coordinators and city-level program directors to complete annual organizational surveys summarizing what their programs were doing. To gain deeper insight into why sites were doing what they were doing and to learn more about promising practices, we conducted multiple in-depth site visits to 10 cities whose programs were operating fairly well by Fall 1998. During these visits, we interviewed staff, partners, students, parents and key city officials.

In 10 schools (located in six of those cities), we also collected computerized attendance records on program participants, gathered cost data, and administered baseline questionnaires and follow-up surveys to fourth- to eighth-grade students who were enrolled in the ESS study.[1] To learn about the program from the parents' perspective, we also conducted telephone surveys of ESS parents in these

Table B.1: Research Activities by City

	Organizational Survey	Implementation Site Visits	Participation and Cost Data, Youth and Parent Surveys	Activity Observations and In-Depth Interviews
Central Falls	X	X	X	X
Minneapolis	X	X	X	X
Missoula	X	X	X	X
Aurora	X	X	X	
Boston	X	X	X	
Savannah	X	X	X	
Atlanta	X	X		
Denver Beacons	X	X		
Jacksonville	X	X		
Long Beach	X	X		
Albuquerque	X			
Denver WEPIC	X			
Flint	X			
Greensboro and Highpoint	X			
Mesa	X			
Oakland	X			
Philadelphia	X			
Salt Lake City	X			

six cities. Last, in three of the middle schools, we collected in-depth, qualitative information through multiple observations of all the ESS after-school activities and open-ended interviews with 34 children and 25 of their parents. (Table B.1, summarizes the research conducted in each ESS city.)

Data

The 10 research schools enrolled youth in the study for 18 months—from the beginning of the Fall 1999 ESS session through December 2000, which was the end of the Fall 2000 session. Enrollment in the study required that parents or guardians sign a permission slip and complete an intake form that provided demographic information and the reasons why they chose to register their children in ESS. During this period, we collected 2,047 intake forms for children and youth in grades 1 through 8 whose parents or guardians consented to allow them to participate in the evaluation. (Table B.2, describes the distribution of the enrollees by school.)

Of these enrollees, 1,708 actually attended at least one day of ESS. Eighty-eight percent (1,511) attended at least one day during the 1999-2000 or 2000-2001 school years, while the others attended only during the summer. The participation chapter is based on the 1,511 enrollees who attended ESS at least once during the school year.

Baseline and Follow-up Surveys. Information in the benefits chapter (Chapter V) is drawn from 371 fourth to eighth graders who completed both a baseline and a follow-up survey. Among the 1,708 enrollees who attended at least one day of ESS, 1,144 were in fourth to eighth grade. Of these youth, 69 percent (786) completed a baseline survey after they began attending activities. In Spring 2001, a follow-up survey was administered to students who were then in fourth to eighth grade and who had ever enrolled in ESS and were still in the school (but not necessarily participating in ESS). Because many of the original enrollees had left the school, only 674 youth completed the follow-up survey. Of this group, 371 had also completed a baseline survey. On average, 12.5 months had elapsed between their baseline and the follow-up survey.

Parent Survey. The parent survey was administered to 221 ESS parents from a pool of 336 who primarily spoke English or Spanish, whose child was in fourth grade or higher or at least nine years old at the time of the survey, and whose child had attended ESS at least one day during the 2000-2001 school year.

Activity Observation. A total of 30 activities were observed in three middle schools. All the activities offered during the 2000-2001 academic year were observed in Calcutt (Central Falls), Porter (Missoula) and Webster (Minneapolis). Webster is a k-8 school; however, we observed only the activities for fifth through eighth graders.

Each activity was observed two or three times during the program cycle (fall and winter-spring semesters). Each time, the researcher observed the entire activity. Researchers used an observation instrument that required them to rate the quality of a set of constructs or dimensions, and describe the behaviors and practices they observed for each dimension. Ratings for the various dimensions were then averaged over the two or three observations to come up with a mean score for each dimension for that activity.

Table B.2: Distribution of ESS Study Enrollment by School

School	Total Number of Enrollments Received	Total Number Of Baseline Surveys Received (For Children In 4th-8th Grades)
Shuman (6-8)	178	106
Scott-Tompkins (k-8)	151	27
Gardner (k-5)	176	32
Lincoln (k-6)	234	54
Webster (k-8)	336	123
C.S. Porter (6-8)	267	241
Hawthorne (k-5)	262	66
Calcutt (6-8)	202	58
Veterans (k-5)	93	33
North (6-8)	148	46
Total	2,047	786

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Outcome Measures

After hypothesizing the outcome areas potentially affected by participation in an after-school program, we reviewed the existing social-psychological and behavioral measures, using those that were appropriate for the study population and developing our own when the existing measures were not adequate.

The final follow-up questionnaires included 16 outcome measures of behaviors and social-psychological constructs across three outcome areas—risk and non-risk behaviors, school attitudes and behaviors, and adult support. Seven outcomes assessed anti-social activities (including one psychological scale of conflict management), and five stressed pro-social activities. Three social-psychological constructs and one behavioral measure assessed academic outcomes. (Table B.3 presents the social-psychological and behavioral

Table B.3: Outcome Measures

Risk and Non-Risk Behaviors

To tap antisocial behavior, we primarily relied on questions used in previous P/PV research studies, but we also adapted questions developed by Thomas Cook for an evaluation of a middle school reform project.* The single item questions assessed anti-social behaviors, including the number of times the youth used alcohol, hit someone, took something from the school, damaged property, was involved in a fight, and was sent to the principal's office. The pro-social items were related to activities that youth might experience in a structured after-school program. The specific items were:

Risk Behavior:

How many times in the past 4 weeks have you:

a. Hit someone?
b. Skipped a class?
c. Damaged school property?
d. Drunk alcohol?
e. Taken stuff at school that wasn't yours?
f. Been sent to the principal's office?

Conflict Management:

When I have a problem or argument with another student:

a. I yell at them.
b. I ignore them.
c. I talk to an adult about it.
d. I push or hit the other person so that it doesn't happen again.
e. I control my anger.
f. I talk things over with them.
g. When other children try to hit me or push me around, I fight back.
h. I fight or argue with adults.

Non-Risk Behavior:

How many times in the past four weeks have you:

a. Written a poem, story or play, or written in a journal or diary, not for school?
b. Read a book from beginning to end that wasn't assigned for school?
c. Taken art, dance or music classes (not during the school day)?
d. Done volunteer work?
e. Performed in front of others (such as reading a poem, singing, dancing or giving a speech)?

School Attitudes and Behaviors

Youth were asked how true each of these statements was for them, on a four-point scale ranging from "not true at all" to "very true."

Belonging:

a. I am proud of belonging to this school.

Efficacy:

a. I'm certain I can master the skills taught in school this year.
b. I can do even the hardest work in my classes if I try.
c. I can do almost all the work in school if I don't give up.
d. Even if my school work is hard, I can learn it.
e. I'm certain I can figure out how to do even the most difficult school work.

Effort:

a. I don't try very hard in school.
b. I often come to class unprepared.
c. I work very hard on my school work.
d. I pay attention in class.

How many times over the past four weeks, have you not had your homework done on time?

Non-Family Adult Support

Youth were asked how many adults outside of their parents and relatives:

a. Pay attention to what's going on in your life?
b. Say something nice to you when you do something good?
c. You could go to if you need some advice about personal problems?
d. You could go to if you are really upset or mad about something?

* T.D. Cook, H.D. Hunt and R.F. Murphy. "Comer's School Development Program in Chicago: A Theory-Based Evaluation." *American Educational Research Journal*, 37(2), 535-597, 2000.

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Table B.4: Cronbach Alphas for the Baseline (BQ) and Follow-Up (FQ) Variables

Scale	Number of components	Cronbach's Alpha	Standardized Alpha
BQ: School belonging	5	0.741	0.746
BQ: School efficacy	5	0.755	0.757
BQ: School effort	4	0.531	0.557
BQ: School engagement	5	0.618	0.619
BQ: Hope for future	5	0.700	0.717
BQ: School liking	3	0.780	0.783
BQ: Instrumental support by friends	3	0.808	0.808
BQ: Self-esteem support by friends	3	0.851	0.852
BQ: Conflict management	8	0.741	0.743
BQ: Parent involvement in school	5	0.720	0.721
BQ: Instrumental support by adults	3	0.801	0.799
BQ: Self-esteem support by adults	4	0.848	0.851
FQ: School efficacy	5	0.814	0.813
FQ: School effort	4	0.479	0.494
FQ: Conflict management (short)	7	0.757	0.758
FQ: Instrumental support by adults (short)	2	0.855	0.855
FQ: Self-esteem support by adults (short)	2	0.770	0.770

measures included on the follow-up questionnaires.) The rest of this section discusses the measures used, the pretest of the survey instrument, and the reliability of the included measures.

Review and Pretest

Two psychologists, Jacqueline Eccles, of the University of Michigan, and Deborah Lowe Vandell, of the University of Wisconsin, reviewed the baseline questionnaire for its suitability for addressing the study's research hypotheses. After further review by P/PV research staff, the baseline questionnaire was pre-tested with children in a Philadelphia school-based, after-school program. The follow-up questionnaire was pre-tested at both a Philadelphia and a Princeton, New Jersey, school-based, after-school program.

Reliabilities

The reliability of a scale refers to its stability, i.e., how consistently the scale measures an underlying construct. We re-evaluated the internal consistency reliabilities of each scale for our study sample, both at baseline and at follow-up, to help assess whether the scales "worked" as measures of specific outcomes for the ESS sample.

Cronbach's alpha is a statistic used to assess internal consistency reliability, the degree to which scale items each measure a common underlying attribute.[2] Values of alpha range from 0 (indicating no internal consistency—that the items have literally nothing in common) to 1 (indicating perfect consistency among the items—that each item is perfectly correlated with the scale as a whole). We consider values of .60 or above to be acceptable.

Alpha values were calculated for all scales used as outcome measures. Internal consistencies were all acceptable, ranging from .53 to .85 at the baseline variables, and from .48 to .86 at the follow-up variables. The only follow-up scale with alphas less than .60 (indeed less than .75) was School Effort. This scale was eliminated, and the single item, "I pay attention in class" was used to gauge school effort. The reliability coefficients at both baseline and follow-up are listed in Table B.4.

Analysis of Behavioral and Attitudes Changes

Our strategy entailed comparing (correlating) the changes over time in experiences, attitudes and behaviors of children who participated in the after-school program for many hours and those who participated for relatively few

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hours. We hypothesized that children who attended more hours of structured and supervised activities would show more developmental gains than children who participated in fewer structured and supervised activities.

Because the hypothesis related to both activities available in ESS and to structured activities available elsewhere, we needed a measure of how much of both the children received. The participation data collected by the ESS staff only provided information on the children's attendance in ESS, not other activities. Thus, we did not use those data. Instead, on the follow-up survey, we asked the children to tell us how many days a week and how many sessions (fall, winter-spring) they attended various types of after-school activities for school year 2000-2001. These included both school-based (i.e., ESS) and non-school-based (at a church, mosque or other religious organization, someplace else for an after-school program or organized sport). To check the reliability of these self-reported data, we compared the self-reported ESS data with the participation data. Students systematically overestimated days of actual attendance by a factor of 1.42; their reports were closer to actual days scheduled than actual days attended. Thus, we multiplied all self-reported data (ESS and other) by .7. The correlation of the self-reports and the staff-reports of ESS participation was .62.

Analytic Strategies

Our analysis of the relationship between participation in ESS and other after-school activities on various outcomes relied heavily on multivariate analysis. In general, the multivariate model took the following form:

$$(1)\quad Y_2 = a + b_1Y_1 + b_2X + b_3\text{ESSDAYS} + b_4\text{OASDAYS} + e_2$$

where:

- Y_2 = the follow-up value of the variable of interest
- Y_1 = the baseline value of the variable of interest
- X = a vector of explanatory variables
- ESSDAYS = the number of days the child reported attending ESS during school year 2000-2001 divided by 21 to put the variable in days-per-week units[3]
- OASDAYS = the number of days the child reported attending other after-school activities during school year 2000-2001 divided by 21 to put the variable in days-per-week units
- a, b_i = coefficients
- e_i = a stochastic disturbance term with a mean of zero and a constant variance

The explanatory variables (X) included in the model were the baseline measures listed in Table B.5. They include such items as age, gender and race/ethnicity; variables that describe the youth's home environment, such as living with only one parent, indication of low household income, religiosity, the parent's education and parenting characteristics such as the quality of their relationship with the child and their involvement in schooling; and dummy variables for the school. This specification made it possible to more precisely estimate the relationship of ESS participation to outcomes by controlling for any differences in these observed characteristics that may occur between high-attending youth and lower-attending youth.[4] The relationship of ESS participation to the change in the outcome, adjusting for any change due to starting conditions as the youth enrolled in the program, is the coefficient on the variable ESSDAYS, b_3.

Table B.5:
Control Variables in Statistical Analyses

Basic Set of Variables Included in the Analyses

The number of weeks between the baseline and the follow-up survey

Demographics:
- Race dummies: black, Hispanic, other non-white race
- Male
- Age at intake

Family and Parent Characteristics:
- Lives in a low-income family
- Lives in a single-parent household
- Parent is a high school dropout
- Parent graduated from high school but did not go to college
- Whether the family moved two or more times in the two years prior to intake
- How often child goes to religious institution

Parental Relationship Characteristics:
- Quality of the parent-child relationship (IPA)
- How involved the parent is in the child's schooling

Personal Characteristics:
- Self-reported grades
- No friends who believe school is important
- Come to ESS for academic reasons

School Dummy:
- Lincoln, Webster, Scott-Tompkins, Shuman, Calcutt, Veterans, Hawthorne, Porter, Gardner, North

In-School Attitude and Behavior Analyses
- School liking scale
- School engagement

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A potential drawback of this dose/response analysis strategy is that participation patterns may be the result of factors that we do not measure and are unable to control for. Part of the outcome difference between the high-attenders and low-attenders, therefore, could be a result of self-selection, not program participation.

To discuss results more easily, all the scale outcomes (such as response to social challenge) were converted into dichotomous variables indicating a positive response (1=if the scale was 3.0 or above, 0=if it was less than 3.0). The use of ordinary least squares (OLS) was not warranted when the dependent variable was dichotomous, such as in the case of whether a participant initiated alcohol use.[5] In such cases, logistic regression analysis, using maximum likelihood estimation, was used to estimate the treatment impact by specifying a linear function for the logit (the logarithm of the odds) of having a positive response (e.g., initiating alcohol use):

$$(4)\quad \log(p/[1-p]) = a + b_2 2X + b_3 ESSDAYS + b_4 OASDAYS + e_2$$

where: p = the probability that $Y_2 = 1$

$1-p$ = the probability that $Y_2 = 0$

All the variables are defined as in equation (1), but on a logit scale.

As describe above, all the explanatory variables controlling for pre-existing differences among the youth were included in the logit models.[6]

Only those youth who, at baseline, had reported never having used alcohol were included in the logistic regression analyses estimating the relationship of ESS to the initiation of alcohol use. Therefore, the baseline assessment of these outcome variables was not included in these models.

The numbers reported in Chapter V, Tables 6 and 8, are the predicted probabilities of an outcome for an individual with the mean characteristic for every independent variable in the logit regressions, except for the number of days of ESS the youth attended.[7] The first predicted probability assumes the hypothetical individual did not attend ESS at all, while the second assumes he or she attended two days a week.

In summary, a variety of analytic strategies were used to evaluate the relationship of ESS participation to the changes in various outcomes. The fundamental approach used a variable that measured the number of days the child attended ESS in school year 2000-2001 (as well as a variable that measured the number of days the child attended other after-school activities in school year 2000-2001) in a multivariate analysis. Table B.6 describes the complete set of estimated impacts.

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Table B.6: The Complete Set of Estimated Impacts of Participating in ESS on Outcomes
(The percent changes are derived from the estimated odds ratios)

Outcome	Change in the Likelihood of Reacting Positively if Child Goes 1 More Day a Week to ESS
Reacting to Social Challenge Positively	54%***
Likelihood Over the Past 4 Weeks of Having:	
Hit Someone	-1%
Vandalized School Property	-24%
Been Sent to the Principal	-23%
Stolen Things In School	-22%
Started to Drink	-28%*
Been Bullied	-30% (p=.11)
Not Finished Homework	-13%
Volunteered	58%***
Performed	16%
Wrote something	27%*
Read for Pleasure	4%
Having a Positive Sense of School Belonging	25%
Having a Very High Sense of School Belonging	27%*
Paying Attention in Class, mostly	-3%
Paying Attention in Class, almost always	52%***
Having a Good Sense of Academic Mastery	17%
Having Parental Involvement	21%
Skipping School	-16%
Starting to Skip School	-31%**
Having More Adult Confidantes	-4%
Having More Adults who Provide Emotional Support	-12%

* The probability that this number is really zero is less than .10.
** The probability that this number is really zero is less than .05.
*** The probability that this number is really zero is less than .01.
Source: Logit run 2-08-02.

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Appendix C
The ESS Cost Study

The Extended-Service Schools (ESS) cost study estimates the cost and funding of 10 after-school programs in the six intensive research cities.[4] The study estimates the cost of serving all youth who attended the after-school program, whether or not the youth had enrolled in the ESS evaluation study. This appendix explains the framework of the cost study, describes how cost data were collected and provides details on cost estimate decisions.

Definitions

After-School Programs. In addition to providing after-school activities, some ESS programs also conducted activities during evenings, weekends or regular school hours. To compare costs across programs, we defined an after-school program as that part of the ESS program that served youth (k-8) during the after-school hours until 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. Using the same definition for each of the 10 ESS sites, we calculated the cost of only the after-school program. We included all operating costs, whether covered by cash grants or by redirected (contributed) resources.

Cash Grants, Redirected (Non-Cash) Contributions and Funders. Cash expenditures are covered by the after-school programs' cash grants. Redirected contributions are expenditures of partner organizations on behalf of the after-school program. This includes the value of contributed time if the person was salaried by the partner organization.

We credited as the funder the organization that gave the cash or non-cash contribution to the after-school program, regardless of the origin of the funds. Therefore, if extra custodial hours to cover after-school program needs were paid for by the school district, then the school district was the funder. Our rationale for this was that original funding sources (e.g., federal money that went to the state and then to the school, etc.) were not always clear. Another reason was that after-school programs often could not apply directly to the original funding source, and so they received these funds from partners who were willing to share their resources or provide access. For example, the free and reduced-price school lunch (and snack) program can only be accessed through a school. Therefore, when an after-school program received snacks through the school nutrition program (federal funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture), the cost of the snacks was counted as a redirected contribution from the school.

Cost Study Timeframe and Prorating Expenditures

The cost study covers the 1999-2000 school year, which was defined as 10 months (usually September through June) during the after-school hours (until 6 p.m.). Some programs' fiscal records covered calendar years rather than school years. In such cases, we used expenditures for a school semester in the prior or the following year as the cost, provided that the after-school program at that time was similar to the one during the 1999-2000 school year.

Excluded Costs

The cost of summer programs was excluded from the cost study. When there was a summer program but expenditures could not be isolated, we excluded two months (16.7%) of annual expenditures for the summer program. This allowed for preparation time, in addition to the actual summer programming, which usually ran for fewer than eight weeks. Likewise, when ESS programs had regularly scheduled evening (usually for older youth or parents) or weekend activities, a pro-rated expenditure amount was assigned to these activities and the cost of the program was reduced by that amount. This usually meant excluding part of some staff salaries, based on the percent of staff hours spent on evening or weekend activities. In estimating the cost of after-school programs that had a school-day component, we excluded the cost of the activities and a pro-rated amount of staff salaries.

The other major excluded cost was the use of facilities. All sites had the use of a school building, but many sites also used other facilities, such as a pool, gym or community center. If a program paid rent to any facility, the cost was excluded because most of the after-school programs did not pay rent or overhead cost for the use of any facility. In addition, even when a site paid rent to a facility, for example for office space, it did not capture the full cost of the space. The cost chapter discusses the contributed value of school buildings and other facilities, but the cost of using the facility (rent, overhead, etc.) is not added into the estimated costs of individual after-school programs. However, when a major portion of the sites' activities took place somewhere else (for example, one site used a recreation center and another used a YMCA pool), the cost study did capture the redirected contribution of staff time to the after-school program.

The cost study also did not include planning or startup costs. The 1999-2000 school year was chosen for the study because all the programs were in operation that year. (During the prior year, 1998-1999, the programs had received a planning grant from the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds to initiate a new program or expand a pre-existing one.)

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Finally, the cost study also excluded the value of volunteer time. However, where volunteers led youth activities, the cost of their stipend and/or transportation allowance was included.

Collection of Cost Data

We obtained cost and funding information by requesting financial documents from the sites and by conducting interviews.

Financial Documents

We collected cost and funding documentation from several sources for each site and then reconciled the figures. We obtained annual financial reports from individual after-school programs, community-based organizations (CBOs) that sponsored individual after-school programs and CBOs that administered one or more ESS programs in a city. Two after-school programs did not have annual financial reports for their complete cash budget so we constructed them from available financial records. We also obtained sites' accountability reports to the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds (the key foundation funder) that compared each after-school program's yearly budget to actual expenditures from the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds grant.

Interviews

We visited each site to interview key staff at the after-school programs, as well as fiscal managers and local partners that made cash and/or non-cash contributions to the programs. In particular, we interviewed program directors, site coordinators and some providers regarding expenditures on behalf of the after-school programs. During the interviews, we also asked for estimates of the time that administrators contributed to the program for planning, fiscal management, fundraising or other services. After each site visit, we wrote detailed cost memos documenting these interviews.

Criteria for Collecting Cost Data

After-school programs creatively combined cash grants and redirected (non-cash) contributions from many sources, but sometimes documentation was sparse. In attempting to capture the full operating cost of a program, we set several criteria for our collection of information:

- **Be comprehensive.** The goal was to learn about all expenditures (including contributed time, services and supplies) that benefited the after-school program.
- **Track down hidden costs.** We looked for hidden costs in three ways: (1) asking how each component of the after-school program was paid for if it did not appear on a financial report; (2) identifying potential cost areas when some programs listed expenditures that other programs did not (for example, we asked, "Who trained the site coordinator?" when no training costs were listed for a site); and (3) using our knowledge of sites from prior visits to raise questions about how specific enriched activities were financed. For example, one after-school program had an enriched dance program (youth traveled to other cities to give performances), but the program's cash budget only showed an hourly teacher payment and minimal supplies. Interviewing the dance teacher revealed an additional grant that she had individually obtained and contributed to the program.
- **Focus on major expenditures.** Salaries were a major cost of after-school programs. Therefore, we spent time clarifying the number of staff and the number of hours per week they were employed, so that salary estimates would be as accurate as possible.
- **Attempt to capture all redirected-contributions, including undocumented contributions.** School districts, partner CBOs, government agencies and colleges made significant non-cash contributions to the after-school programs. If possible, we obtained documentation on these contributions. However, many redirected contributions were made with a "handshake" and were not broken out in reports. Therefore, we sometimes relied on in-person interviews with the contributors to obtain this information.
- **Include the cost of contributed administrative time.** While some after-school programs had more than one salaried staff person (cash cost) involved in administrative tasks, other programs employed fewer staff, or had part-time staff, but administrators in partner agencies contributed their time to perform administrative tasks for the programs. To capture the full administrative cost, the study also included the cost of this contributed administrative time. For example, when an after-school program benefited from a regular time contribution from a partner, such as the time spent by a school principal, we included a percentage of that person's estimated salary. However, we only counted time contributions that were at least 5 percent, on a regular basis, of the person's work week.

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Calculating The Unit Cost: The Daily Cost of a Youth Slot in a Fully Operational Program

The daily cost per youth slot for a fully operational program provides a unit measure for capacity cost estimates. In other words, the unit cost can be used to estimate how much it would cost to serve X number of youth for Y days when a program is fully operational—that is, during the weeks when all activities are in session.

We followed these steps to calculate the unit cost. The cost of the program per week was calculated by dividing the average total program cost ($149,620) by the average number of weeks of programming (33 weeks). The average cost per week across all 10 programs was $4,534. The average weekly cost was then divided by the average number of days per week that programs offered youth activities (4.7 days). The average daily program cost was then divided by 63, the average number of youth who attended the program each day, resulting in the cost per day per youth slot of $15.

The average total cost of the 10 after-school programs is a simple mean—that is, there was no weighting of programs according to the number of youth served or any other criteria. A week of programming was any week when youth activities took place at least one day. A program's number of days per week was the number of scheduled days per week, disregarding holidays or incomplete weeks. In other words, it was the number of days per week when a program was fully operational.

We used two methods for measuring the average number of youth who attended the program each day. For 7 of the 10 programs, we were able to use the number of snacks that a site served each day when it was fully operational. The snack number was usually obtained by interviewing site coordinators, although in some cases we also obtained supporting documentation. We were unable to obtain snack information for the other three programs. However, for each of those programs we had individual attendance data for November 1999 (a fully operational month), which we used to estimate the average number of youth who attended each day.

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Appendix Endnotes

1. The six cities (and schools within the cities) were: Aurora, Colorado (North Middle School); Boston, Massachusetts (Gardner School); Central Falls, Rhode Island (Calcutt Middle School, Veterans Memorial Elementary School); Minneapolis, Minnesota (Lincoln Community School, Webster Open School); Missoula, Montana (Hawthorne Elementary School, C. S. Porter Middle School); and Savannah, Georgia (Scott-Tompkins, Shuman Middle School). The cities and schools were chosen because they had the capacity to collect the necessary data. Very few cities operated high school programs. Thus, the participation and outcomes data were collected on only elementary and middle school students.

2. L.J. Cronbach. "Coefficient Alpha and the internal Structure of Tests." *Psychometrika*, Vol. 16. , pp. 297-334, 1951. Alpha is the proportion of a scale's total variance attributable to a common source.

3. Students attended, on average, 21 weeks during the school year.

4. This model is a more robust specification than one that analyzes changes in outcomes. An analysis of change scores assumes that the amount of change and baseline level of the outcome measure are perfectly related. If that assumption is violated, an analysis of change scores is a misspecification of the model and the resulting estimates of the coefficients are incorrect. The model estimate for the analysis reported here controls for baseline level if this assumption is violated, and is equivalent to the change score model if this assumption holds.

5. For details about the problems involved in estimation with dichotomous variables, see T. Amemiya. "Qualitative Response Models: A Survey." *Journal of Economic Literature*, 19(4), 483-536, 1981.

6. Occasionally, control variables had to be deleted from a particular logistic regression in order to get the estimation process to convert.

7. The predicted probability is calculated as the inverse of $(1+e^{-b'Z})$ where b is the vector of estimated logit coefficients and Z is a vector of control variables in the logit regression, evaluated at their mean except for ESSDAYS.

8. The intensive research cities and the 10 schools within the six cities were Aurora, Colorado (North Middle School); Boston (Gardner School); Central Falls, Rhode Island (Calcutt Middle School, Veterans Memorial Elementary School); Minneapolis (Lincoln Community School, Webster Open School); Missoula, Montana (Hawthorne Elementary School, C.S. Porter Middle School); Savannah (Scott-Tompkins, Shuman Middle School).

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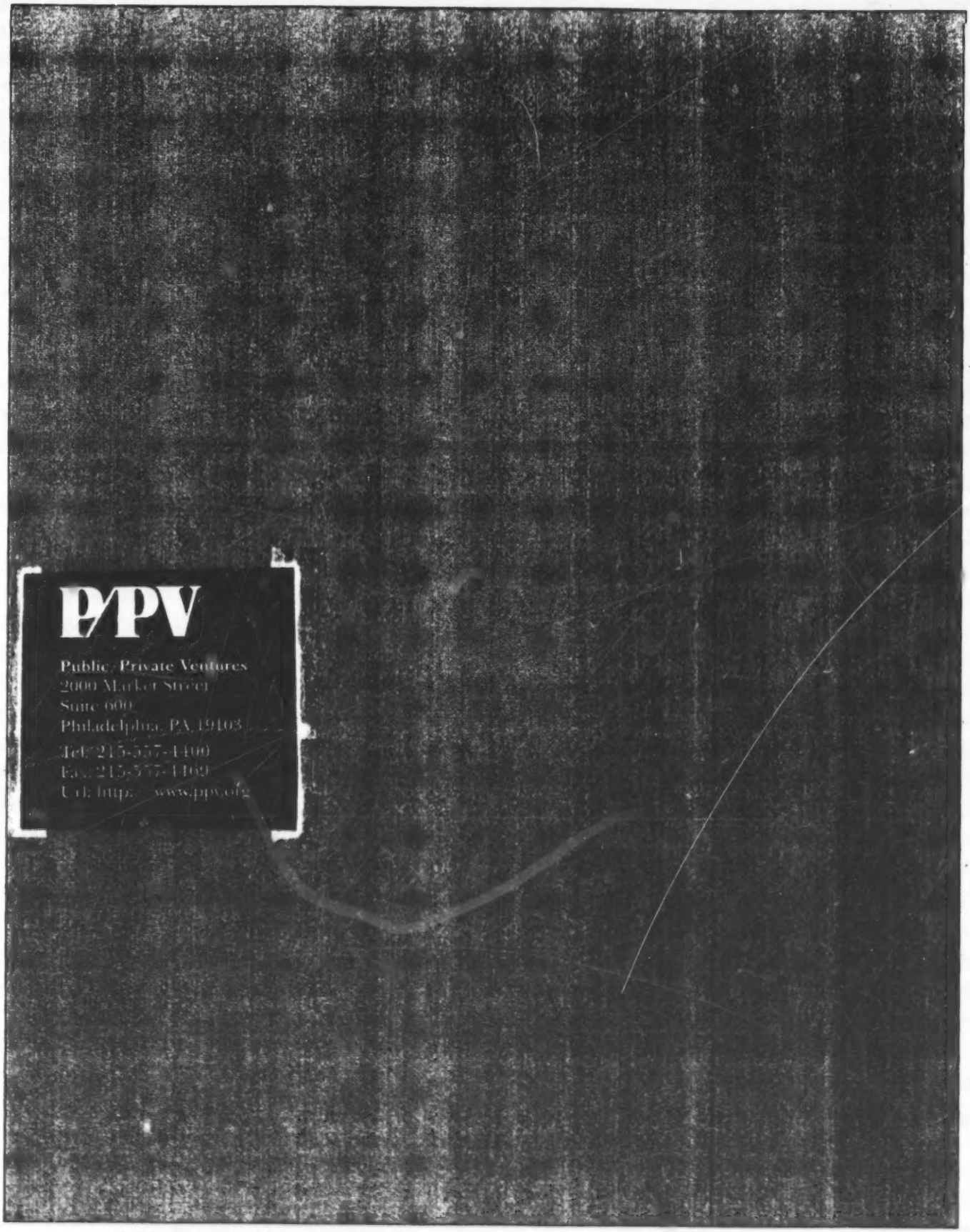

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